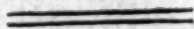


ERRORS
OF
EDUCATION.



VOL. I.

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ERRATA

OF

EDUCATION

VOL. I

THE
E R R O R S
O F
E D U C A T I O N.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY MRS. PARSONS.

DEDICATED (BY PERMISSION)
TO THE RIGHT HON. THE COUNTESS OF
HILLSBOROUGH.

Instability of Mind impedes our Road to Perfection; and
Youth, if not animated by *Example* to illustrate the
Precepts of Virtue, will ever fall into Error.

VOL I.

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THE

REPORT OF

EDUCATIONAL

IN THE

OF THE



TO THE

RIGHT HONORABLE THE COUNTESS OF

HILLSBOROUGH.

MADAM,

IMPRESSED with a most lively sense
of gratitude for the honor your lady-
ship has permitted me, of placing the
following sheets under your patronage, I
should ill deserve a favor so flattering, if,
by assuming the common language of
dedicators ; and, by injudicious praise, I
should

DEDICATION.

should wound that delicacy which is superior to the voice of flattery, and can receive no gratification from the encomiums of a private individual; I therefore most readily give up all attempts to display virtues which are universally acknowledged, and cannot be delineated by so unskilful a hand as mine.

'Tis to entreat your ladyship's favorable reception of this work that I presume to address you; conscious of its numberless imperfections, I seek, under the sanction of your name, to screen it from the lash of criticism. Impelled by the same motives which first induced me to take up the pen, and encouraged by the favorable reception "Miss Meredith" met with from the indulgence of the public, I have ventured a second time to throw myself on its mercy: and if, "the Errors of Education" should be so fortunate as to obtain your ladyship's approbation, it will enable me to look forward with hope, and trust, though not without trembling, to the same generosity
and

DEDICATION.

and candour I have so recently experienced.
I have the honor to remain, with the warm-
est sentiments of respect and gratitude,

MADAM,

Your Ladyship's greatly obliged

And most devoted humble Servant,

ELIZA PARSONS.

ERRORS

DEDICATION.

and candour I have to recently experienced.
I have the honour to remain, with the warm
assurances of respect and gratitude,

MADAM,

Your Ladyship's greatly obliged

And most devoted humble servant,

ELIZA A. F. BROWN.

ERRORS



ERRORS OF EDUCATION.

CHAP. I.

A RETROSPECT.

BORN to a plentiful fortune, Sir William Beaumont entered into life with all those bright expectations which are wont to fill a lively and youthful imagination : indulged from infancy by a too tender mother, who lost a beloved husband when her son was only six years of age ; accustomed to follow the bent of his own inclinations without check or control ; blest by nature with great advantages of person, and genius capable of the greatest things, had it been properly cultivated and directed ; yet, (by the mistaken tenderness of a parent,) permitted to waste that time, which might have *expanded his mind and engaged him in the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge*, in the most frivolous and trifling amusements, no wonder that when of age to be introduced into life, he fell a prey to the artifices of those who knew how to flatter such idle propensities as were too glaring to be overlooked !—His juvenile follies were of little consequence, but when he attained the age of twenty-

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one,

one, and the possession of five thousand a year, 'twas then he determined to quit Warwickshire and his indulgent parent, for the Metropolis. Lady Beaumont had long since been sensible of her error, but it was too late to rectify it:—passionate, obstinate, with a haughtiness of disposition above reprehension or advice, she had found it impossible to guide his judgment or obtain any authority over his actions—he had acquired the common accomplishments of fencing, dancing, &c. from masters provided for that purpose, and a superficial knowledge of languages and history from a tutor who was never permitted to reprove or correct his idleness and neglect of study. Such was Sir William Beaumont when he was allowed the free use of his fortune and the happiness of sharing the delights of the town. Hunting, fishing, shooting and romping with farmers daughters, had hitherto engaged all his attention, but, no sooner was he of age, than he sighed for the pleasures of London: His mother, conscious that she had too long secluded him from a knowledge of mankind, trembled for the consequences which might result from first impressions on a mind so self-sufficient and uninformed; she determined, therefore, to accompany him, and, if possible, direct him in the choice of his companions, on which must, in a great measure, depend the happiness of his future days.

Sir William had never given the smallest intimation of his wish for her company, the declaration therefore of her design to quit her beloved retirement and emerge again into the world, for the purpose of enjoying the society of her darling son, was received by him with a stoical indifference:—elated with the possession of his fortune and a high opinion of his own consequence,

consequence, he had no idea that an introduction into life was necessary, or that Sir William Beaumont could meet less respect or attention in Town than when residing at the seat of his ancestors, and lording it over his own tenants. All necessary preparations were made for this important journey, and when the day arrived it was with very different sensations that lady Beaumont and her son quitted Sion-Park—Sir William was intoxicated with joy at being enabled to realize all those delightful visions which had for a long time floated on his brain, and promised him such excess of happiness: he bade adieu to the mansion of peace without sorrow or regret. Not so, lady Beaumont, secluded so many years from the gay world, by choice not necessity, fond of domestic enjoyments and doating on an only son, the image of a beloved husband, not blind to his faults, though too indulgent to his errors; she shuddered at the prospect before her—the follies of a licentious world, gilded by the specious names of fashion and gallantry, she foresaw would quickly gain an ascendant over his volatile disposition, and she dreaded their effects. Her fashionable connections were few, her brother, lord Maybank, resided entirely in Scotland; of her husband's relations there were none living but very distant ones, and with those she held no correspondence. Sir Edward and lady Stanley, and Mr. and Mrs. Warner, both families of fashion and merit, and who resided in her neighbourhood during the summer months, were her only intimates; these friends were now at Bath, but, being daily expected to set off for town, it was on them she depended for a proper introduction of her son into the world.

She quitted her beloved retirement with a flood of tears; and when the carriage was announced, threw herself into it, impressed with a prophetic idea that she beheld, for the last time, those favorite walks in which she was wont to enjoy peace and pleasing reflections, interrupted only by maternal anxiety, an anxiety which now encreased in proportion to the dangerous dissipation the object of her cares was about to encounter.

She now looked back with deep regret on the mistaken fondness that induced her to prefer a private to a public mode of education, by the latter of which, though her son's morals might have been more endangered, his judgment must have been strengthened; and by which he must likewise have gained some knowledge of mankind, sufficient perhaps to have guarded him against those impositions too frequently practised on the unwary.

At the last stage of the journey, when Sir William's heart beat high with transport, and busy fancy was forming a thousand pleasurable schemes, lady Beaumont, after contemplating him a few moments in silence, with a sigh expressive of her feelings, thus addressed him.

“ My dear William, you seem in a pleasing reverie: but suffer me, now we are about to enter on that great world you have so long wished to behold, to open my heart to you, and impress *yours* with the admonitions and advice of a tender mother and an affectionate friend; a friend who has, who can have, only your interest and happiness in view, and whose future peace must all depend on your conduct. The death of your beloved father left me but one object in the world to interest my feelings, and but one method of proving my love and
respect

respect to his memory, that of strictly performing the duties of a parent to his only child, and though, at this moment, reason convinces me I have been guilty of many errors, yet they were the errors of a too tender and indulgent heart, and did not flow from negligence or design, I reproach *myself*;—alas, my dear son, let me not live to experience reproach from *you*.”—

Unable to proceed, she burst into tears.—Sir William was surprised, he took her hand.—

“ My dear madam, from whence proceed those tears ? For what do you blame yourself ? Why suppose it possible I should prove abandoned and ungrateful ? to reproach you is not in my power, for you have been the best of mothers.”

“ Ah, William, (said she,) I have indeed been a fond weak mother, but not the *best* of mothers—to gratify my own selfish affection, I have kept you at Sion-Park a stranger to the world, to prevent pain to myself I have prohibited your tutor from punishing little errors which have grown into habits ; from the same blamable indulgence I would not permit your idle propensities to be curbed, nor your passions controled ; the consequence of which is, that the little learning you have acquired is superficial, your judgment trifling, and although I hope and believe your heart is good, yet, your impetuous disposition, your volatile and trifling method of spending those hours which ought to have been given to more important concerns, and permitting your passions to guide in every pursuit has altogether given that turn to your general conduct, that justifies me in *reproaching myself*:—*You* only can reconcile me to my own feelings: If you, who are a stranger to the deceits and artifices of mankind, a novice in all the destructive modes of dissipating fortune,
reputation

reputation and health; if you will permit me to inform your judgment, to point out to you the rocks and quicksands a young man of fortune, like you, unknowing of the wiles of men, is most likely to stumble on; if you will consult me in the choice of your intimates: and profit by my experience; if you will suffer the leading feature in your character, *pride*, to operate in a manner likely to guard you against all low vices, and a detestation of every mean unworthy imposition; then, my dear son, will your judgment ripen; then will you soon be enabled to think properly of those dissipations and vices, which, under the specious name of fashion, destroy fortune and honor, and are sure to entail everlasting remorse and unavailing repentance—then you will be the pride, the glory of your mother; then will your juvenile errors be forgotten, and then you will never have cause to accuse me of a mistaken tenderness as productive of real evil to yourself.—Thus, dear William, the future happiness of my life is in your hands; your affection I will not doubt, but henceforth consider me as your best, your dearest friend, tenderly indulgent, and warmly interested in every event likely to prove conducive to your honor and happiness, and a painful sufferer if you deviate from the road to either.”

Sir William, though not possessed of much sensibility, could not help being affected, and pressing his mother's hand tenderly between his, most earnestly assured her, “that her judgment and affectionate counsel should direct every action of his life and his conduct prove his sense of her maternal care, and the obligations he owed her from his infancy, to the present hour.”

Lady

Lady Beaumont rejoiced at the visible emotions of her son, determining, if possible, to retain the influence, she began to think, she held over his heart by her affectionate and gentle admonitions, and be henceforth sparing of them on trivial occasions to give them the greater weight in matters of consequence; and although she looked forward with trembling anxiety, to his entrance in the world, yet, the soother, *hope*, came to her aid, and afforded a temporary relief to her mind, which communicated itself to her countenance, and enabled her to join in cheerful remarks to enliven her son.

CHAP. II.

LONDON.

THE journey was now ended, the carriage entered Town just as the lamps began to throw their pale light to conduct the travellers securely through the streets:—Sir William was in transports; the bustle of carriages driving to the play, the opera, and other various places for dissipating time and fortune, with the croud of humbler foot-passengers, the shops all illuminated, and shewing their different wares to the best advantage; the whole together struck him with surprise and speechless admiration; nor is it to be wondered at, if we reflect that his whole life hitherto had been passed in the country, where his companions were, equally with himself, strangers to London; and however descriptions

tions from books might have excited his wishes and engaged his attention, so as to produce in his mind a thousand bright ideas of that wonderful city; yet so much did the present appearance of the streets he passed through, exceed his most sanguine expectations, that he was lost in a whirl of conjecture what such multitudes of people were driving so hastily back and forward to see, and how it was possible they could all find habitations.

His mother did not interrupt his reverie, till the carriage stopped in Stanhope-street, May-Fair, where she had, by means of her banker, taken a handsome ready furnished house. When the carriage drew up, and lady Beaumont exclaimed, "Thank Heaven our journey is happily ended," he started from a train of delightful visions, and eagerly kissing her hand, exclaimed, "Oh my dear madam, what a charming place is London!" She smiled at his rhapsody, and observing to him the servant held the coach door open, he jumped out and conducting her into the house, again warmly congratulated her and himself on their arrival. By the attention of their friend, the banker, they found every thing ready for their reception, proper servants were hired, supper ordered, and in a few hours they were comfortably settled. But little conversation took place that evening, Lady Beaumont was fatigued, and Sir William found full employment in reflection on what he had seen, and in anticipating the wonders he expected to see; they therefore, by mutual consent, made a hasty supper and retired to their respective apartments.

CHAP. III.

MORE WONDERS.

ACCUSTOMED from infancy to early hours, Sir William arose the moment day light appeared through his shutters, eager to view the delightful prospects of the preceding evening; having thrown on his cloaths, opened the door of his apartment, and found the way down stairs, he was inconceivably astonished at the silence which pervaded through the house, he opened one room, then another, all was dark and comfortless, not a soul was moving, he looked at his watch,—near eight o'clock,—it was the hour of breakfast in the country, it was the hour of bustle and domestic occupations *there*; *here*, all was still as death, and a most wonderful contrast to the animation he had witnessed on his entrance into Town. He returned to his apartment, and ringing the bell for his servant, was instantly attended, for Andrew, like his master, was up, and had been endeavouring to explore his way through the dark rooms below; and, being equally mortified in his search, waited with eagerness the summons he joyfully obeyed. “Prythee, Andrew, (said Sir William) are the servants all in bed at this late hour?” “Yes, an please your honour; (replied Andrew) I am sure its a burning shame;—at home the cows are all milked, the servants all breakfasted, and Robin driving his plough hours before now; I have heard John, the groom to squire Warner, say, the London

servants were deadly lazy varmint, and sure enough your honour finds it so; but, with your leave, I'll go and ring a peal in their ears;—hark! though I think I hear one of the doors unbolting, I'll run and see." He did so, and soon returned with intelligence that one of the house-maids was just up, and, "Lord, her did so stare to hear your honour was up, and as I tould her, wanted breakfast, she said, no people of fashion that ever she lived with, breakfasted till twelve, 'twas only tradesfolks who get up at eight o'clock, and she thought poor servants, who generally were kept up till one or two o'clock, required rest as well as gentlefolks." "Indeed, (said Sir William,) the girl was right, if 'tis customary for people to keep such hours: but I like, you know, Andrew, to be in bed at eleven, and the servants at Sion-Park were never up later, and therefore we could all rise with the lark."—"Ah Lord! (replied Andrew,) I wish to my mind we were at Sion-Park still; what a noise and crowding there was last night, I am sure I could hardly manage old Lightfoot, the poor beast didn't like it at all."

"Well, (said Sir William,) we must be content, Andrew, to wait for our breakfast every morning, unless my mother will make a new regulation for our London servants: at present, however, I am very hungry, therefore try your influence to hasten breakfast."

When Andrew quitted the apartment, Sir William again opened the window and looked up and down the street; every house was shut up,—not a passenger on the pavement,—all was silent as the village near Sion-Park. "Bless me, (cried he) what a horrid dull part of the town has my mother chosen! the houses, indeed, are genteel, but there are no inhabitants:

I shall

I shall never consent to reside here, I must persuade her to remove into one of those delightful streets we past through last night." He then began to reflect on the various amusing sights his driving through the streets had afforded him, and continued in a pleasing reverie 'till summoned to breakfast; he joined his mother with much pleasure, and enquiring how she rested after her fatigue, mentioned the disappointment he met with in getting up so early.—Lady Beaumont smiling blamed herself for not giving him some intimation of the different hours commonly observed in London :—" But, I fear, William, (said she) you will too soon grow reconciled to such irregular hours, the amusements you will naturally expect to partake of, will exclude the observance of those regularities which families in the country find conducive both to health and pleasure."—" But, my dear madam, (he replied,) how come you to make choice of this dull situation, where there appears to be no human beings but ourselves." " O! you will find yourself agreeably mistaken bye and bye; about twelve or one o'clock you will have no reason to complain of the silence which now seems to pervade the streets: however, if you have no objection, we will order the carriage and go into the city this morning, I have a little business to transact, and I wish to thank Mr. Thornhill, our banker, for his civilities, and introduce him to your acquaintance: tho' a citizen he is a man of fashion, of fortune, and excellent character." Sir William cheerfully acquiesced; and having ordered Andrew's attendance to dress his hair, prepared to accompany his mother.—As they drove through the streets his satisfaction began to manifest itself in his countenance :—When they came past
Temple-

Temple Bar, the swarm of people, the confusion of carriages, and the busy importance of every face, attracted his attention, and engaged his admiration.—Lady Beaumont took the opportunity to acquaint him with several particulars of manners and customs which had been observed during her commerce with the world; but alas! good lady, wonderful were the alterations and refinements which fashion and folly had erected in the course of twenty-three years, since which period she had never visited London; and she found her own attention irresistibly engaged by a variety of new objects, new buildings, and above all, by the strange extravagance of dress; she viewed her son, and soon perceived another kind of valet was necessary, and other abilities requisite to what poor Andrew possessed, to make his master appear like a man of fashion.

On their arrival at Mr. Thornhill's they met with a reception so truly friendly and polite, that Sir William was not a little surprised to find the man of business, one of the best bred men he ever saw; he felt a conscious deficiency which mortified his pride, and began to fear, that self-consequence, which carried all before it in the country, would in London meet with a considerable abatement.—Lady Beaumont having a good deal of business to settle, appointed a day which she entreated Mr. Thornhill to spend with her; he politely acceded to her wishes, on condition that Sir William and her ladyship, if disengaged should favor himself and his sister with their company that day to a family dinner; they consented with pleasure, apologising for morning dresses, and were accordingly introduced to Miss Thornhill.—The brother and sister resided together; their respectable father, who

who had carried on business for a number of years, with an established reputation for honour, probity and universal benevolence, had lately retired a few miles into the country to enjoy good air, exercise, and the supreme delight of a self-approving mind; there he diffused his blessings on the unfortunate, and, by continual acts of benevolence, rendered himself deserving those favors the bounty of Providence had bestowed on him.—The son and daughter of this worthy man accustomed from the example of their father to consider every child of sorrow as their relation, with hearts, susceptible of compassion for the woes of their fellow-creatures, and hands “open as day to melting charity,” possessed all that elegance of manners and external politeness which the best education could bestow; hence it was that Mr. and Miss Thornhill were universally esteemed, and their acquaintance sought for by every fashionable circle in the town, but they knew how to discriminate, and though courted by all, they confined these intimacies to a few respectable families, whose virtues could receive no lustre from the accidental advantages of birth or fortune.—Such were Mr. and Miss Thornhill; with whose persons and manners Sir William was so captivated, that he supposed it impossible the most brilliant circles could produce more elegance, or the most celebrated toasts boast more charms than the amiable Miss Thornhill. His mother saw, with infinite delight, his first impressions, and presaged to herself the happiest consequences from cultivating an intimacy with a family so truly estimable. The brother and sister were equally gratified, Lady Beaumont’s character they had been taught to respect, from the long correspondence between the families; Sir William’s exterior was

was extremely prepossessing, and his behaviour that day could not fail of confirming the favorable ideas they were disposed to entertain of him. They parted at a late hour, with a mutual desire of cultivating a society so gratifying to each party, and the return of the visit was fixed for an early day.—When seated in the carriage Sir William warmly expressed his approbation of their hospitable entertainers, with a mixture of surprise that people in business were so much accomplished.—“ I have ever understood (said he) from the books I have read, and from the daily papers, that the citizens had no ideas beyond trade, nor any fund of amusement within themselves but what consisted in the pleasures of the table ;—surely these Thornhills are persons of better birth and education than the generality of trades-people.” “ You misapply that term, (replied Lady Beaumont) bankers are considered in a different point of view from trades-people ; ’tis true, many of them have been in business, but in general ’tis opulent merchants that settle themselves in banking houses ; and, in London, you will find few more respectable characters than some of the principal bankers and merchants : I know ’tis very common in essay and novel writers to ridicule the citizens, and describe them as vulgar and uninformed ; but such general indiscriminate censure is highly absurd.—In so large a city, no doubt, there are many very low people, who, by industry, have acquired large fortunes, and who, from want of education, and from confining their ideas wholly to the accumulation of wealth can never get the better of their vulgar habits : but persons of that description generally associate together, and very seldom thrust themselves into good company.”

“ Well,

“ Well, (cried Sir William) I am quite charmed with Mr. Thornhill and his sister ; they are a little too grave, but, perhaps, when we are better acquainted, I shall find them more free”—his attention was now solely engrossed by the multitude of carriages which conveyed their weary owners from the different places of amusement ; places which, from a constant resort to them every evening, had long lost the power to charm, and were frequented from fashion and habit more than from any pleasure they could give ; (but at those places they met with their acquaintance, they endeavoured by dress and show to excite admiration in the one sex and envy of the other ; they trifled away that time, which otherwise would have been given to *ennui* and reflections, which perhaps were ill adapted to afford tranquillity)—Sir William enjoyed much amusement at a sight so novel, and his surprise was considerably increased, when, on entering Stanhope-street, he found those houses, which in the morning looked deserted, all elegantly lighted up ; and one of the neighbours having a grand rout that evening, the street was crowded with carriages and servants. When they came home Lady Beaumont was highly gratified by finding a card from Sir Edward and Lady Stanley, who arrived in Town the preceding evening, nearly at the same time with their friends, had called at the door in the morning to know when Lady Beaumont was expected, and were greatly delighted to hear of her arrival. “ Now, my dear William, (said her ladyship, when she had perused the card,) you will have friends more capable of introducing you into life than myself ;—few persons are more respectable than the Stanleys ; perfectly acquainted with the town and every fashionable

able circle, yet accustomed to distinguish and select their acquaintance; with them you will enjoy every advantage of introduction a fond parent can desire. "You are very good, my dear mother, to be so solicitous on my account (replied Sir William) and I shall be happy to profit by the acquaintance of Sir Edward and Lady Stanley; and, if you please, we will call on them in the morning." "With all my heart, (returned her ladyship;) indeed, I believe we shall find it necessary to consult Sir Edward in the choice of trades-people to modernize us a little. You must provide yourself with another valet, I do not mean to discharge poor Andrew, but he is little acquainted with the mode of dressing now observed, therefore I shall retain him more immediately in my service, and you must enquire for a more fashionable attendant"—When they separated for the night, Sir William found ample scope for reflection on the occurrences of the day—every thing was new and wonderful, he could not conceive how people in business like the Thornhills should acquire that polish he observed in their manners; he was charmed with Miss Thornhill, and felt a degree of envy when he viewed the brother and himself in a comparative scale; and instead of blaming himself for his want of attention to the lessons of his tutor, he reflected, with some indignation, on his mother, for keeping him so long secluded from the world—he resolved now to make himself ample amends for the time he thought lost, and anticipated the pleasures he expected to enjoy in a commerce with people of fashion.

Lady Beaumont, on the contrary, was retracing with much satisfaction the result of their visit to the city; she was equally charmed with
Miss

Miss Thornhill, and thought, if it was possible to bring about an union between her and Sir William it would be productive of mutual happiness; she was not blind to the defects of his education, but he had natural good sense, his exterior was prepossessing, and though naturally haughty and passionate, he was at times both good-natured and generous; she flattered herself, the company which the Stanleys would introduce him into, might polish his manners, correct the impetuosity of his disposition, and call forth those virtues, which too great indulgence had obscured, but not entirely eradicated. Under these agreeable delusions they both passed the night, and met in the morning with equal cheerfulness; as early as fashion would permit, they drove to Sir Edward Stanley's, and were received by him and his lady with that affectionate politeness which communicates pleasure and conciliates esteem. Lady Stanley was infinitely delighted that Lady Beaumont was drawn from her retirement to mix with a world, wherein she must ever be considered as an ornament; she thought it high time too, that Sir William should be initiated into those customs and manners which folly and fashion have rendered indispensable observances in a young man of rank and fortune; and both Sir Edward and herself tendered their services to attend their friends to all public exhibitions worthy their notice, and signified their hopes that the most unreserved intimacy would subsist between the two families:—being so recently arrived in Town the Stanleys had no engagements, and a proposal was made and eagerly accepted by Sir William of going in the evening to the theatre, to see Mrs. Abington in *Lady Townley*—Lady Beaumont declined an invitation to dinner, but
promised

promised to join her friends at an early hour for the play.—Sir Edward, however, took her soon to stroll in the park, whilst the ladies went a shopping, as Lady Beaumont found her wardrobe wanted many little fashionable requisites.

The day happened to be uncommonly fine, and Hyde-park was graced with innumerable persons of rank and fashion in carriages, on horseback, and on foot. A sight so novel threw Sir William into raptures—he gazed with admiration on the variety of beautiful objects that surrounded him, and unaccustomed to shuffle through a croud was every moment in danger of being run over. In their walk Sir Edward Stanley was accosted by two gentlemen, whose easy careless manners proved their self-consequence. “Ha! Stanley, (said one of them) I rejoice to see you.—Well, what news from Bath?” “I know none, my lord, the same dull insipid round of amusements which never varies;—but permit me to introduce my friend, Sir William Beaumont, to your Lordship;—Sir William, this is Lord Stormer, and this Colonel Minors.” Mutual compliments having passed, they walked altogether towards the Serpentine river. The lively remarks and satirical observations made by these gay gentlemen could not fail of engaging the attention and admiration of one so little acquainted with fashionable manners as Sir William, every thing he heard, every thing he saw, opened a new source of information and delight; whilst his gay companions were not a little amused by that wonder and eagerness with which he devoured every passing object; they presently conceived an acquaintance with him might prove a desirable acquisition, and Colonel Minors con-

trived,

trived to drop behind with Sir Edward, and received the wished for intelligence, that Sir William Beaumont was a country gentleman of large fortune, just come of age, and entirely a stranger to the Town: this was enough to redouble his attention and civility to his new acquaintance, and their intended visit to the theatre being casually mentioned, the Colonel proposed being of the party, to the no small delight of Sir William, who felt much gratified by the politeness of Lord Stormer and the gay Colonel.—(they parted with apparent regret, and a mutual promise of being early visitors at Lady Stanley's—Sir Edward dropt his friend in Stanhope-street; and Sir William eagerly hastened to acquaint his mother how highly he had been entertained.

CHAP. IV.

MEN OF THE WORLD.

LORD STORMER was at this period about thirty, and possessed an agreeable person, with the air and manners of a gentleman; it was his misfortune to lose his parents in his infancy, he was therefore a stranger to filial tenderness, nor ever experienced those reciprocal sweet emotions which nature implants in the bosoms of parents and children: (by his guardians he was placed at Westminster school, and in due time removed to college) where he was soon initiated into all those vices, which, in spite of the master's care, are sure to predominate in all great seminaries: (at twenty he was sent to the Continent with a tutor,) or rather a companion, for he had long since got above being taught; this gentleman, whose finances were by no means suited to his education, nor indeed to his wants, knowing that his lordship would soon be of age, without any parents to scrutinize into his improvements, or control his inclination, perfectly understood his own interest, which he conceived must depend on gratifying his pupil in all his wishes; under the externals of good sense and decorum of manners, he concealed a mean and selfish spirit, which could sacrifice the future happiness of his charge

charge to the hope of advancing his own fortune. Alas, how few are there equal to the trust of superintending the education and morals of a young man of fashion! The honest and liberal minded, who feel the necessity of performing their duty, too generally incur the hatred of the youth they wish to guide: fond mistaken parents are wrought upon to think the preceptor rigid and austere; and a strict observance of what he conceives due from his situation, terminates too often in a cold dismissal from a thankless office:—Whilst the mean, supple, superficial man, who can bend his mind to connive at the vices of his pupil, and flatter the foibles of the parents, is rewarded with pensions, benefices, and the friendship of those whose morals he has helped to debase—Lord Stormer returned from the Continent to take possession of a fine fortune, which his long minority had redeemed from the mortgages his ancestors prodigality had laid upon the estates; with a mind naturally frank, generous and unsuspecting, he was fond of every dissipation and species of amusement which was held forth to a young man of fashion; his companions were selected from the gay and dissolute; gallantry and gaming alternately filled up every hour; he had brought with him from Italy a mistress, whose beauty and voice, joined with a consummate share of art, had entirely captivated his mind, and led him into such extravagance to gratify her taste for expensive pleasures, that his fortune, ample as it was, scarcely sufficed for the enormous demands continually made by this lady, and the debts of honour contracted at the gaming table: the consequence was, being always involved in difficulties, which hourly encreased, until necessity obliged him to resort

to

to those tables, in the mean hope of re-establishing the ease of his own circumstances by the ruin of others.

Such was Lord Stormer when he was introduced to Sir William Beaumont: a family connection, through the female line, with Sir Edward Stanley, occasioned a degree of intimacy, which otherwise would not have been sought for by the last named gentleman. Colonel Minors had no fortune to depend upon, his father, a worthy respectable clergyman, had in the early part of his life been tutor to a nobleman, who, from his son's shewing a predilection for the army, presented him with a pair of colours, and afterwards a lieutenancy—at the death of his father the little he left being divided equally between his mother, his sister and himself, the two former retired into the country to live frugally on their little income, whilst the brother purchased a company in the guards; and, for a time, found his income sufficient for his wants; but, unhappily for him, in that corps most of the officers were men of fashion and fortune; he soon imbibed their manners, their pleasures, their vices, and consequently his pay was by no means competent to the expenses he was drawn into—at first he had recourse to his mother for an occasional supply; but not being entirely destitute of feeling and humanity, he soon revolted against the idea of involving her in pecuniary difficulties, which to him could be only a temporary relief: the gaming-table then was a necessary resource—thither he flew to supply his wants; and, from habits and necessity, grew so much attached to play, that every honest generous principle his worthy father had endeavoured to inculcate, was totally eradicated—the gamester is void of all principle, every
tender

tender feeling, every generous, humane sentiment is given up; (and, like Aaron's rod, a passion for play, swallows up all other passions, and leaves only the detestable one of avarice.) Governed by this ruling passion, the Colonel no sooner heard that Sir William Beaumont was a young man of large fortune, just launched into the world, than he eagerly sought to cultivate an acquaintance, from which he hoped to derive many advantages. Sir Edward Stanley was really an amiable man, yet found himself often compelled to follow the lead of fashion, and sometimes frequent those houses established for the sole purpose of play; hence he became acquainted with the Colonel, whose intimacy with his relation occasioned them often to meet in parties, though he by no means wished to cultivate an unreserved intercourse with characters he could not altogether approve: and when he returned to his lady, and mentioned their intention of joining her party to the theatre, she earnestly requested he would take an opportunity to develop their real characters to Sir William, "For I should never forgive myself, (said this amiable woman) if, through our means, he formed an intimacy with persons so improper for a young man on his first entrance into life." — Sir Edward assured her he would conform to her wishes, and have a *tête à tête* with Sir William the following morning.—

CHAP. V.

A VISIT TO THE THEATRE.

AT an early hour the company assembled at Lady Stanley's, where, added to the engaged party, were a Mrs. and Miss Rivers, the mother, a widow to a gentleman who held a very lucrative place at court, but unhappily having a taste for every fashionable expence, lived up to the full extent of his income, and at his death, which was occasioned by a violent blow from a tennis-ball, left his lady and one daughter of nineteen years of age, with the slender provision of two thousand pounds, the mother's fortune, which had been secured for the children.—With this trifle they retired to a cheap village in Berkshire, and boarded at a farm-house—the death of the person who managed their little affairs obliged Mrs. Rivers to come to London for a few days, and having called to pay their respects to Lady Stanley previous to their quitting Town, she had insisted on their company to the theatre. This addition to the party was very acceptable to the gentlemen, for Miss Rivers, without being a beauty, was a very pleasing interesting figure: the disappointment of those hopes she once thought herself entitled to indulge, her removal from those gay circles she had been accustomed to shine

shine in, to a still quiet village, with few other companions than her books and music, had thrown a soft melancholy over her countenance, and given a kind of pathetic tone to her voice, which sunk into the heart, and procured her that attention which a very agreeable unadorned person might otherwise have failed to excite from the gay and dissipated. At the usual hour they all repaired to the theatre, and Sir William, notwithstanding his attention was much engaged by the novelty of the place, found means to place himself immediately behind Miss Rivers, and although he was too great a novice to entertain her with the fashionable chit-chat of the world, his particular notice was not unobserved by the mother and daughter, the former took an opportunity of making some enquiries concerning him, and was well satisfied with the information she gained. Mean time the curtain drew up and opened a new world to the view of Sir William; the brilliancy of the house, the beauty of the ladies, and the enchanting performance of Mrs. Abington, distracted his ideas, and divided his attention in such a manner as plainly evinced to those around him the whole was a scene of novelty—after the first half hour, however, he began to be insensibly attached to the business on the stage, and was in raptures at the conclusion of every act. Colonel Minors, who had been sometime enjoying, what he thought his ridiculous enthusiasm, freely flapping him on the shoulder, exclaimed, “By my soul, Sir William, you afford more entertainment to your neighbours than the play does! I presume this is the first time you ever saw a play.” “It is, Sir,” returned Sir William, with some confusion, looking around and perceiving many eyes rivetted on

him. "By Heavens, then, I envy you; for my part I am so sick of a constant repetition of those things that I scarcely ever look at the stage"—"To what purpose then do you come here?" "Merely to kill time, and see the company, that's the chief inducement which brings people, or the poor devils on the stage might play to empty boxes."—Sir William felt mortified; he was delighted with his entertainment, yet the idea of appearing singular, and incurring ridicule by his attention, hurt him; he looked at Miss Rivers, her eyes were evidently wandering round the house: Lord Stormer and Sir Edward Stanley seemed deeply engaged in conversation, and Lady Stanley was the only one of the party who appeared attentive; happy to find one person to countenance him, he shifted his seat and presently got behind her and his mother, determined that evening to satisfy his inclination for the play, that he might in future view such scenes with fashionable indifference.—The after-piece, which happened to be a musical one, drew the attention of the whole house; he was no longer singular.—"Delightful!—charming!—Divine creature!—Encore, encore!" echoed through the theatre; when the favorite actress sung, a profound silence reigned in the house, and he quickly observed, that good sentences and excellent representations of the follies of mankind met with little regard or applause, whilst sounds, without sense, threw every body into raptures:—but 'twas the fashion of the day to be musically mad, and those who were absurd enough to prefer a rational entertainment to a flimsy opera, were poor insipid beings, without taste or enthusiasm.—Sir William watched Lord Stormer and the Colonel, and joined in the praises they bestowed on

on Mrs. Billington, determined to copy as closely as possible the sentiments and manners which he saw were universally fashionable. When the curtain dropt, the party prepared to separate. Colonel Minors took Sir William by the hand, "As you are a stranger to Town, Sir, said he, I shall be happy to have the honor of your acquaintance, and introduce you to such fashionable circles as I am sure will afford you great pleasure." "You do me honor, Colonel, (said Sir William, bowing) I shall be at all times happy to attend you." "Well, then, (returned he, carelessly,) I will breakfast with you to-morrow at eleven." Sir William was delighted with the freedom of this self-invitation, and promised himself a world of pleasure from an acquaintance so desirable. Lady Beaumont finding Mrs. Rivers was in Green-street, politely offered to set her and her daughter down, and, from the natural benevolence of her disposition, treated the ladies with peculiar marks of respect and attention: she enquired what stay they made in Town, and expressed a wish to be favored with their company in Stanhope-street. Mrs. Rivers felt highly gratified by this invitation, which she politely accepted, saying, her business would detain her a few days longer in London. After they were set down, her ladyship and Sir William took a slight refreshment: she asked him how he had passed the evening? "With much pleasure I assure you, madam, as it has been the means of introducing me to the acquaintance of such gentlemen as are capable of giving me the information I wish to obtain, respecting fashions and the customs of the world." "I suppose you mean Lord Stormer and Colonel Minors, (replied she;) of their dispositions and morals

I know nothing, though I should suppose they are not unworthy your intimacy because they visit at Lady Stanley's: yet, my dear, if I may be permitted to advise, you should be cautious of contracting an intimacy until we learn their characters."—"Dear madam, (interrupted Sir William,) you are so suspicious, can you believe Sir Edward Stanley would introduce improper persons to us; we are assured they are men of rank and fashion, and I have not a doubt but their characters are unexceptionable."—He spoke this with an air so peremptory and pettish that Lady Beaumont thought proper to desist from any further observations.

CHAP. VI.

A MODERN PARENT.

WHEN Mrs. Rivers and her daughter were retired to their apartment, the former asked Anna, what she thought of Sir William Beaumont; "He is a very handsome man, (replied she,) but I believe very little acquainted with the world." "So much the better, (said Mrs. Rivers,) you know, Anna, how much we are reduced in point of circumstances; and tho' Lady Stanley, and a few others treat us with kindness, yet we are compelled to consider their civilities as obligations, than which nothing can

can be more mortifying—now, with your person and accomplishments, you have a right to set some value on yourself, and if I am not mistaken, Sir William Beaumont took very particular notice of you; I shall therefore defer our return into the country, and cultivate the intimacy which will naturally arise if we accept Lady Beaumont's invitation." "Ah, (cried Miss Rivers) I fear I have little chance of engaging Sir William's attention; he will be introduced into the gay world; and a girl whose attractions are not very brilliant, and who is divested of all advantages from fortune and connection, can have little hopes of success."—"You are a simpleton, (cried her mother) and know nothing of the foundation of my expectations: this young man, I learned from Lady Stanley, has a very large fortune, has all his life been bred up in the country, and therefore may be easily biassed by those who think it worth their while to attempt gaining him. You have no fortune, 'tis true, whilst I live, and therefore 'tis necessary you should endeavour to gain a good settlement."—"Undoubtedly, madam, (answered Anna) but I fear"—"Fear nothing, (said Mrs. Rivers pettishly) you have a very good person, child, you dance and play well, and, if you manage your cards properly, I have little doubt of your success—pay him much attention, find out his favorite subjects, accord with his sentiments, and, my life for it, you will soon become a favorite." Miss Rivers, who had unhappily from her infancy been brought up in a line of dissipation, by an imprudent mother, who had early taught her every blessing of life depended on riches, and that beauty and a few superficial accomplishments were all that were necessary to recommend a young

young girl to the notice of the world, had, on the death of her father, experienced the severest mortification—unable to figure in those gay circles which his situation had entitled her to enter, treated with coldness by her equals and with contempt by her superiors, she felt every distress which humbled pride and a conscious inferiority of fortune could produce.—Without any resources within themselves to procure amusement, or enable them to employ their hours profitably. The mother and daughter retired to a small village to brood over their misfortunes, and regret those days of pleasure which seemed for ever fled.

Ye imprudent parents who throw away those hours on idle frivolous amusements which should be dedicated to the instruction of your rising offspring, who fill their heads with vanity, and neglect to store their minds with wisdom and goodness, who in the hour of adversity, to which all are subject, can have no retrospect to afford a gleam of comfort ; but, conscious that by imprudence you have invited sorrow and remorse, and that you have endeavoured, by idle dreams and visionary hopes, to subdue reflection and build up castles which have no foundation ; what recompence can you make to those unfortunate beings whose educations you have neglected, and on whom you have entailed misery in this life, and a dreadful prospect hereafter, from the omission of those duties it was your business to see performed !

The unfortunate Anna Rivers had been bred in the school of vanity, and had too deeply imbibed the pernicious maxims of the gay world, who hold nothing contemptible but poverty, and consider riches as a passport into the best company, and an equivalent for the deficiency

deficiency of birth or merit. She was easily persuaded therefore to second the views of her imprudent mother, and plan schemes for seducing the affections of Sir William Beaumont.—The very next morning was fixed on to pay their visit to Lady Beaumont, and the intermediate time employed in regulating their future plans.

CHAP. VII.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF A WEAK JUDGMENT.

THE following morning at the appointed hour Colonel Minors appeared at Sir William Beaumont's breakfast table, and Lady Beaumont choosing to have her tea in her dressing room, the new friends had a tête à tête—" 'Tis astonishing Sir William, (said the Colonel) that you should have lived secluded from London so many years and received home education; why, you must be rather a novice in the manners and customs of the great world."—" Entirely so; I have no acquaintance in London but the Stanleys and a Mr. and Miss Thornhill in the city, to whom my mother introduced me two days ago."—" In the city I
what

what could induce her ladyship to form city acquaintances? take my word for it they are nobody at this end of the Town; you want far different intimates: pardon my freedom, Sir William, but you have been so long rusticated that 'tis necessary to cultivate the acquaintance of young men of fashion, who can give you the polish which is requisite to make a figure in polite circles." "Indeed, Colonel, I am very fortunate in my introduction to you, (replied Sir William,) I have seen none more capable than yourself of giving the lead to my future improvements, and I feel much obliged by your very friendly intentions."—"It will afford me great pleasure to be of service to you; (answered the Colonel) suppose we step into St. James's-street to look over the papers, take a turn or two in the Mall, then have our horses and go to Hyde-park, which will fill up the hours till dressing time.—*Apropos*; suppose you dine with me, Lord Stormer, and a few friends, at the Thatched-house;" "I should like it of all things, (said Sir William,) but my mother, perhaps, might not be pleased, and your friends might think me an intruder;"—"O, as to the latter part of your apprehension, I can do it away at once, by engaging that my friends will think themselves obliged to me for the introduction; the former, indeed, I can say nothing to: he then added, with a smile rather bordering on contempt, "but if your mother meant to hold you still in leading strings she had better kept you in the country for life."—This sarcasm had its effect, Sir William's pride took fire, the impetuosity of his temper returned, and rising instantly, "you are right Colonel, (cried he,) surely my mother has no title to control my actions now; and this day I shall dedicate

dedicate to you.”—“ You do me honor and pleasure, (returned the artful Minors :) let us then be going.”—The gentlemen immediately sallied forth ;—some little time after, Lady Beaumont came down stairs, and enquiring for her son, was surprised to find he was gone out without paying her the compliment of the morning ; she felt hurt at this little mark of disrespect, but supposing he might be gone to Sir Edward Stanley’s, was not uneasy at his absence—in the course of the morning she received a visit from Mrs. and Miss Rivers, the compassion she felt for Mrs. Rivers’s situation induced her to treat them with the highest politeness and civility, and as Mrs. Rivers took occasion to observe her business would oblige her to a longer residence in Town, Lady Beaumont warmly invited them to a frequent repetition of their visits, and, before they separated, to the no small delight of the artful Mrs. Rivers, they were engaged to spend the following day but one, in Stanhope-street.

Disappointed in not finding Sir William at home they hurried to Lady Stanley’s, she was from home likewise, they then directed their steps to Hyde-park, and very soon recognized the gentleman they sought for, with Colonel Minors, and two or three others of equal merit and fashion—the gentlemen seeing the ladies unattended, delivered their horses to the servants and joined in their walk—by accident Sir William was placed next Miss Rivers, she made the most of the advantage by paying him the greatest attention, coincided with his opinions, praised the justness of his remarks, and declared there was peculiar pleasure in accompanying a gentleman in his first view of the world who was capable of such judicious ob-

servations:—in this manner she engaged Sir William's attention; he began to consider her person, which was really very pleasing, and set off with studied advantage; he thought her beautiful, sensible and entertaining, she flattered his self-consequence, which had received a considerable check since his being in London, and to be approved by a young lady, elegant and fashionable as Miss Rivers, was a distinction which gave him much pleasure and engaged his gratitude.—After walking a considerable time, the gentlemen conducted the ladies home, but not before a party was made for the play in the evening.—Sir William returned home to dress, not a little delighted with his morning entertainment, which had prolonged the time till four o'clock—Lady Beaumont's accustomed dinner hour:—she was waiting his return with some degree of impatience, when she heard his voice calling for his servant to dress him—she was a little surprised that he had not looked in upon her first, as she had not seen him all day, and therefore, sent to acquaint him dinner was ready to be served up, and that she would gladly excuse his undress rather than have it spoil. Judge her surprise, when the servant returned with his master's compliments, and that he was engaged to dine with Colonel Minors, but would call in and see her when he was dressed!—Thunderstruck with such a message, she was very little capable of composing herself to dine; the little she had seen of Colonel Minors did not recommend him to her favor; and he appeared one of the last men she should have wished for a companion to her son; yet he was received by the Stanleys, and she might judge erroneously; she could not expect Sir William would be confined to her; but, nevertheless, she

she might have supposed he would not have formed any engagement to dine out without previously acquainting her with the invitation. These unpleasant reflections were interrupted by the entrance of Sir William, who approached her with some little confusion, from a consciousness of having not paid her his customary attention that day.—“ Good morning to you, William, I hope you have spent an agreeable morning.—Pray how do the Stanleys do ? ” “ I don’t know, indeed, (replied he, in a careless manner ;) I have not seen them ” —“ No ! — Then with whom have you spent so long a morning, and made an engagement to dinner ? ” “ With Colonel Minors : we have been in Hyde-park, and I dine with him and some other young men of fashion, at the Thatched-house in St. James’s-street. ” —“ Ah, William, your intimates are very soon chosen, and with your usual impetuosity, without enquiring how far Colonel Minors and those young men of fashion may deserve your attention. ” —“ Why really, madam, (replied he) I don’t think it necessary to go from house to house to enquire their characters, as you would do in the country when about to hire a servant. ” “ And yet, (said she) of how much more consequence is it to be cautious in the company you select than in hiring a servant ; who, at worst, can only injure your property, whilst men of bad morals may irreparably destroy your peace of mind. ” —“ Well, Madam, (answered he with a haughty air,) it will be time enough to give up my acquaintance when I am convinced of their unworthiness ; at present I entertain no such apprehensions. ” — He then took leave, with cold civility, and hastened to his appointment. For some time after he left her, Lady Beaumont felt the most poignant

poignant uneasiness—all the evils she had apprehended seemed realized; it appeared of the highest consequence to investigate the character of Colonel Minors; and, notwithstanding the very unfashionable hour, she ordered her carriage and drove to Lady Stanley's.—That lady had just risen from her dinner, and was rather surprised at such an early visit, though always happy to see Lady Beaumont, who apologised for breaking in upon her so abruptly, and then, without ceremony opened the business which brought her there.

“New to the world, my dear Lady Stanley, poor William is in danger of being the dupe of the first artful men who shall engage his inclinations in their favor; his sudden violent attachment to Colonel Minors makes me uneasy, yet, I should hope without any cause; for, as he is admitted a visitor to your ladyship, I suppose he is worthy of the distinction; but to speak candidly, I wish to know his character from you.” “Indeed, my dear madam, (replied Lady Stanley) I am much concerned that an accidental meeting in the park should have introduced him to Sir William’s acquaintance; he is certainly a dissipated man, and not by any means a fit companion for him; unfortunately he is too intimate with Lord Stormer, who being related to our family sometimes calls in, and has once or twice brought the Colonel with him.” “Ah! (said Lady Beaumont,) ’tis as I feared: an intimacy with that man will ruin my son: stranger as he is to the vices and deceptions of mankind, he will judge from false appearances, and be captivated by those various amusements so difficult to be withstood by the young and unwary.” “I fear, my dear Lady Beaumont, (replied Lady Stanley) Sir William will

will find many tutors in this great Town equally qualified for the office as Colonel Minors; I have, however, desired Sir Edward to develope, as far as he prudently can, *his* character to your son, and to give him a little advice in a friendly manner—'tis a delicate point, and must be managed accordingly; but you will pardon me for observing, that it will be better to take no notice at present of his pursuits, lest you should make him reserved in his communications, and lessen that affection he appears to have for so good a parent; besides, your silence will throw a greater weight in the observations of Sir Edward; gently to wean him from improper connections must be our plan—harsh methods, independent as he is, would too probably encrease the evil." Lady Beaumont warmly acknowledged her sense of this kind advice, which she determined implicitly to follow; and, after sitting an hour or two took leave, as Lady Stanley had an engagement on her hands for the evening. Lady Beaumont returned home, and eagerly waited for her son's appearance. The next day was appointed for the return of the Thornhills visit, and as she supposed Mr. Thornhill would be with her early in the morning to settle some business, previous to his sister's coming, she amused herself by looking over papers and getting every thing in order, to save time and trouble.

Sir William was conducted by Colonel Minors to the Thatched-house, Lord Stormer and several other young men of fashion were already there; they received Sir William with the utmost freedom and politeness; an excellent dinner, and a free circulation of the glass inspired the company with the highest spirits; and a thousand brilliant sallies and pleasant repartees passed

passed amongst them; and when the dinner-party broke up, and Colonel Minors reminded Sir William of their engagement in Green-street, it was with extreme reluctance he quitted such delightful companions, nor was he suffered to depart until he had engaged to sup there the following evening. They then repaired to the ladies who impatiently waited for them. Miss Rivers's marked attention and the great complaisance of Mrs. Rivers towards Sir William did not fail to engage the observation of the Colonel, who presently developed their scheme, and saw the train laid to catch the affections of the Baronet, this plan it was his interest to disconcert: if Sir William became attached to Miss Rivers, all his designs would prove abortive; he easily penetrated into the views of Mrs. Rivers, but he had taken a fancy to the Baronet's estate himself, and therefore was bound to prevent an artful ambitious mother and a young extravagant daughter from depriving him of so considerable a booty; he resolved carefully to watch, and as much as possible to counteract their designs. The play that evening was Romeo and Juliet, Miss Rivers, who was seated by Sir William, appeared much interested in the piece; she sighed, languished, and uttered her sentiments of the performance in such a melting tone, and accompanied her words with such tender glances, that her companion found himself irresistibly engaged, he gazed on her with tenderness and delight, thought her the most charming female in the world; and when the entertainment was over, and the ladies safely conducted home, he withstood all the solicitations of the Colonel to sup at a tavern, more from an earnest desire to reflect on the pleasures of the evening, and the charms of Miss Rivers, than

than from anxiety to relieve the uneasy mind of his mother, who nevertheless, had spent the evening in the most cruel uneasiness. Affection had so much got the better of her resentment she felt at his behaviour in the morning, that at his entrance she received him with transports—he very readily acquainted her with the transactions of the day, and she was not a little pleased to find he had been with Mrs. Rivers and her daughter, of whom she entertained the highest opinion:—she reminded him of the Thornhills visit the ensuing day, and it being a late hour they separated with mutual satisfaction. Sir William could not sleep, he found full employment for his thoughts in reviewing the transactions of the day: the company he had dined with were models worthy his imitation, and he resolved to copy their manners and acquire their ease and good breeding, which he perceived was absolutely necessary to obtain the reputation of a man of fashion.—Miss Rivers next appeared to his imagination the most lovely of her sex, her sense and sweetness of disposition were enchanting, he longed for the morning that he might pay his compliments to her, and was delighted with his good fortune in having, so soon after his arrival in Town, been introduced to company and companions so desirable.—Such are the pleasing and delusive reveries of young people, who, without judgment sufficient to penetrate into real characters, are caught by externals, and having their self-consequence gratified by the apparent attention they meet with from the artful and designing of both sexes, find too much pleasure in the illusion, to wish for better information, and seek for every occasion to justify an early prepossession, which too often gives the colour to their future days.

C H A P. VIII.

MUTUAL DECEPTION.

BEFORE Sir William had finished his breakfast, his *dear friend*, the Colonel, presented himself to attend his morning excursions, and in fact, to prevent any *fête à fête*, between his pupil and Miss Rivers—without the least suspicion of his views Sir William received him with the warmest acknowledgments for his kind attention, and they soon sallied forth to Green-street.—Artful people quickly read each other; Mrs. Rivers was by no means pleased to see the Colonel, he was too knowing to be taken in, and she dreaded his influence over his companion; 'twas necessary, however, to be civil, and as Miss Rivers had already received instructions to attach herself to the Baronet; the old lady addressed all her politeness to the Colonel, which was to answer the double purpose of keeping his attention engaged and giving opportunities for a particular conversation to the others, which was extremely well supported by the young lady, to the no small delight of her auditor.—Music being accidentally mentioned, Miss was ordered

ordered to sing the last new songs; she lamented, that being in lodgings there was no harpsichord, but added, that if business *should happen* to detain them any time in Town, she must certainly hire one, however, she would sing those airs as well as she could, as she made it a rule to comply with her mother's wishes; and to *her* request she appealed as an excuse for the little entertainment her voice could afford; after this well-timed apology she began, and having really a very pretty voice and some taste, the gentlemen were in raptures, particularly Sir William, who had not been in the habits of hearing songs so well executed, his praises therefore were warm and extravagant, and highly gratified the ladies. After a very long visit a walk was proposed, which Sir William very unwillingly was obliged to decline, his mother having requested he would be at home to receive Mr. Thornhill, and transact the business necessary to be settled, now he was of age. The Colonel was disappointed of his company at dinner, and the ladies not pleased at his seclusion for the remainder of the day—he lamented the *disagreeable* engagement, but bid the Colonel depend on seeing him at night, invited him to meet the ladies the following day to dine with his mother, and assured the latter he would wait on them early to conduct them to Stanhope-street—they then separated, the ladies entertaining the most sanguine hopes of success, the Colonel determined to counteract their views, and Sir William quite intoxicated with love and admiration of Miss Rivers. On his return home, he found Sir Edward Stanley, who warmly complained of his neglect, and reminded him of his wish to be serviceable to him, and introduce him to a worthy set of acquaintance; the Baronet made a
 confused

confused apology, adding, he was greatly indebted to him for the pleasure of an agreeable acquaintance in Colonel Minors.—“Indeed you are not; (said Sir Edward,) I certainly never meant to introduce the Colonel to an intimacy with you; my knowledge of him is very slender, and such as it is it would not warrant me to wish him the companion of a friend of mine.”

—“Why not, Sir? (replied Sir William,) I apprehend there is a very friendly intercourse between the Colonel and your relation Lord Stormer.”—“There is so; yet, notwithstanding this, I think him much too gay and dissipated to be a valuable acquaintance. Men who have lived long in the world are frequently thrown into society by no means desirable, you have in that respect some advantages; new to the Town you are at liberty to choose your companions, and if you will profit by the experience of a man some years older than yourself, and permit me to point out some worthy persons to your knowledge, I think you will have no reason to repent the trust reposed in me.”—“You are very obliging, Sir, (answered Sir William coldly;) I shall be happy to be known to your friends.” Sir Edward Stanley had too much good sense to press the point any farther then, or to appear offended at the other’s reserve; after a little common-place chat, he took leave; and Sir William retired to dress, much displeased at Stanley’s observations, and scarcely able to recover his temper before the arrival of Mr. Thornhill; about two hours adjusted the business they had to transact, and every thing was settled to their mutual satisfaction. The arrival of Miss Thornhill gave Lady Beaumont infinite pleasure, for she had conceived a very warm esteem for that young lady from the little she
had

had seen of her disposition, which seemed calculated to invite attention, and never to disappoint the expectations formed of her—but far different were the sentiments of Sir William from those he had at first entertained of this worthy brother and sister—the contrast between them and the Colonel and Miss Rivers, was indeed very striking, there, all was gaiety, wit, and freedom, here, was sweetness, and good sense, mixed with a proper decorum.—When first introduced to the Thornhills Sir William was astonished at their politeness, but now there appeared a stiffness, an undecipherable something wanting, to give them that ease and polish so conspicuous in the others: in short, he could esteem and respect them, but they were no longer entitled to his admiration; there were others still more perfect, and though he allowed Miss Thornhill to be very pleasing and accomplished, her attractions bore no degree of comparison with the charming Miss Rivers and the elegant Colonel. Lady Beaumont saw with infinite pain, that Sir William paid very slight attention to her worthy guests, and when she pressed them to finish the evening there, he neither joined in the request nor expressed any regret at parting—he promised soon to accompany his mother in a return of the visit, but the air of indifference with which he spoke, evidently proved it would afford him little pleasure.

The moment their carriage drove off, he took up his hat—“Are you going out, William?” said her ladyship, with much surprise, “Yes, madam; I am engaged to meet Lord Stormer, Colonel Minors and some others this evening at the Thatched-house.” “Upon my word, (replied she,) you make good use of your time; not a week in Town, and already to have acquired

quired such a set of fashionable acquaintance ; you will rub off the rust of a country education : —however, (added she, with a more serious air,) I flatter myself, my dear son, you will never be drawn into gaming parties ; you know so little of all kinds of games, of either skill or chance, that I hope you will not run the hazard of being duped by the more knowing ones.”

“ I do not intend it, (replied he,) but ’tis necessary I should mix a little with the world, and I am certainly obliged to those gentlemen for their civilities.” He then made a low cool bow and walked off hastily to his engagement. —He found the company all assembled, though it was an early hour : Lord Stormer and one of the party were engaged with the dice Box, another set was at a whist table ; the Colonel with two others were amusing themselves with observing the game, and now and then betting a trifle : —on Sir William’s entrance he was received with general satisfaction, and like the others for some time was diverted by the players. —

“ Do you understand whist ?” (asked the Colonel in a careless way) “ Very little (said Sir William), “ that’s just the case with me and these two gentlemen, we have not skill sufficient to oppose our friends here, but I am tired of looking on, and since we are much on a par as to the knowledge of whist suppose we play a single game to pass the time ’till their rubber is finished.” —Sir William hesitated, his mother’s caution occurred to him, “ Nay, (said the Colonel) ’tis wholly indifferent to me,” “ and to me,” added one of the others, “ pho, (said the third,) to what purpose stand idling here ? we can’t talk and may as well throw away our time with the cards for half an hour.” As the other two assented, Sir William had not resolution to
give

give a denial, and cards were immediately called for—How many are the unfortunates of both sexes who owe their ruin to that imbecility of mind, that irresolution which prevents their declining proposals their hearts do not assent to!—Without any opinion of their own, or, if they have an opinion, without fortitude to support it against persuasion, or, perhaps ridicule; they submit their judgment to the caprice of others, and are imperceptibly, against their reason, drawn into errors, nay, often into vices, from which they would at first have shrunk with horror—how necessary is it, therefore, to direct young minds in the choice of their companions, and, by early displaying the folly of a weak judgment and the various artifices of mankind, teach them to judge with deliberation, and never blindly follow the lead of others, or give up an opinion, justly founded, where either honour or happiness is concerned. Sir William Beaumont had at this time no fondness for play, his mother's admonition was not forgot, yet, unwilling to disappoint others, particularly the Colonel, to whom he conceived himself so much obliged, he acquiesced, and seated himself at the table: they cut, and a Mr. Morton was allotted for his partner—they played the first game only for a guinea, Sir William won; the next game the stakes were doubled, and, in short, after sitting three hours Sir William arose from the table in high spirits, near fifty guineas in pocket, and praised by the whole party for his skill and knowledge of the game—elated with his good fortune, and gratified by the compliments he received, he passed the evening in such high good humour, and was so delighted with his companions, that he very readily accorded with their request to meet them the following

lowing evening at Brooks's. It was between three and four in the morning when he returned home; poor Andrew who had sat up with his valet, was in the utmost anxiety, nor could be persuaded but some terrible accident must have happened to his master; the valet ridiculed his fears, and assured him no man of fashion ever entered his house till day light: and that even a sober citizen, when the business of the day was over, repaired to some tavern or coffee-house and regaled himself till two or three in the morning.—Andrew lifted up his hands and pathetically lamented that his dear lady should ever have brought master and himself to such a vile place, where they turned day into night. Sir William's arrival put an end to his cares, and he very readily obeyed the order which sent him to bed. This one fatal evening had done irreparable mischief, it had inspired the Baronet with a fondness for play, and a confidence in his own skill; always satisfied with himself, his vanity received abundance of gratification from the praises of others; he now began to live; pleasures assailed him on every side; the mornings he would divide between Miss Rivers and Hyde-park, the evenings he should devote to his noble friends; and to follow their lead he conceived to be the road to happiness:—he resigned himself to sleep under the pleasing illusion of being a happy man. When the morning was far advanced Lady Beaumont sent to know if he was well. Being disturbed by the servant and informed it was past eleven o'clock, he threw on his cloaths and prepared to attend his mother; at this moment deceit under the mask of prudence suggested to him, it was necessary to conceal the transactions of the preceding evening from his parent: that single moment decided his

his fate ; the instant he could resolve to deceive a mother, and conscious that he acted contrary to her wishes, submit to the meanness of falsehood and dissimulation, that instant he forfeited honour, integrity and every virtue. Unfortunate young man, he knew not that in deceiving his best, his only friend, he gave himself up to folly, vice and bitter remorse !

Lady Beaumont received him with a tender air, and, faintly smiling, “ Did I not tell you William (said she,) you would soon grow accustomed to late hours ? Yet, my dear son, I hope you do not often intend to repeat these irregularities ; such hours, to one always in the habits of rising early, will most certainly injure your health, and I can conceive no pleasures as deserving such a sacrifice.—Pray, may I ask how you spent your evening ? ” — “ We supped a pretty large party in St. James’s-street, and had some very good songs which engaged our attention ; the hours flew away, and we had no conception it was so late. ” — This was the first deliberate falsehood he had endeavoured to impose on his mother—he spoke with hesitation, and blushed as he spoke : she observed his confusion, and though a little alarmed as supposing he had not spoke the *whole* truth, prudently changed the subject, rightly conceiving a young man at his time of life would not be pleased with being too strictly interrogated : she asked him to take the carriage at a proper hour and accommodate Mrs. Rivers and her daughter. I feel, said this worthy woman, a particular respect and compassion for them, persons accustomed to figure in the first circles, always in the habits of company and amusements, by one fatal stroke cut off at once from every enjoyment, and at a time friendly intercourse was
more

more than ever necessary to alleviate sorrow; thrown among strangers, obliged to contract their expences and retire wholly within themselves, what situation can be more afflictive? and how incumbent is it on every generous mind to reconcile them to their fate by double kindness and attention!" "I think as you do, my dear madam, (said the Baronet;) but 'tis strange from so very lucrative a place as I have been told Mr. Rivers enjoyed, he could save nothing for his amiable family. "There is nothing surprising in that, (replied she :) Mr. Rivers was a gay dissipated man, and unfortunately had a violent fondness for play; his lady was brought up in the same habits—no idea of economy ever entered their heads—consequently they very soon run thro' their private fortune and lived to the height, indeed beyond their income: ruin, therefore, was inevitable; and had Mr. Rivers lived longer, in all probability a suspension of the distress they now suffer would have been all they could have hoped for—alas! (continued Lady Beaumont) how many worthy families are ruined by splitting on the same rock! slaves to appearances, they endeavour to vie with each other in their expences; and as, with prudence and economy, a small fortune will enable people to live respectably, so the largest income will be found insufficient to supply extravagancies and artificial wants; and when a fondness for gambling is added to other follies, what fortune or estate is equal to the demands?—O, my dear son, let me conjure you strictly to guard against that destructive vice, gaming, and permit not bad examples or precepts to draw you into the commission of vices, you have in fact no inclination for; whatever follies you are guilty of, let them be your own; do
not

not adopt the faults of others; but if you must copy let it be from wise and virtuous originals only.—This apostrophe gave a sudden pang to Sir William; and conscious that the advice was necessary, he was visibly affected; but, recovering himself he told her ladyship he had taken the liberty to add to their dinner party by an invitation to Colonel Minors: “Any respectable friends of yours must always be welcome,” was her reply.—She then retired to her dressing-room, and Sir William ordered the carriage, with an intention to take the ladies to Kensington gardens previous to their visit. When alone he could not chase reflection; his mother’s tender regard for him he had no room to doubt, but she was no longer a young woman, she had lived in retirement many years, her disposition therefore was tinged with a degree of severity not pleasant to a young mind: cards were universally introduced, *that* the Colonel assured him, and it would be impossible to avoid play; but then he would only play for a few pounds, which would be no inconvenience to lose and in company he knew: having made up his mind on this subject, he soon taught himself to think deceit and concealment from his mother as venial faults; for there was no necessity a young man should be obliged to enter into a detail of his various amusements, like a child afraid of correction—thus being satisfied with himself he prepared to attend the ladies; who, on *their* part were sparing no pains to render themselves amiable.—“I am certain, Anna, (said Mrs. Rivers, placing some ornaments on her daughter’s head,) that it will be your own fault if you do not succeed with Sir William Beaumont; I am sure he is much struck with your person and voice; take care to keep the hold you have ac-

quired, by great attention and acquiescence in his sentiments—I see his foible, 'tis vanity, and being conscious of his deficiencies in knowledge of the world, he will be doubly grateful to that person who appears pleased with his conversation, and helps to put him in conceit with himself.”—“Certainly, madam, (replied Miss Rivers) I shall observe your instructions; the conquest is a very desirable one; but I wish he was not in such habits of intimacy with Colonel Minors; I don't like that man, he has a great deal of art, and should he suspect our design would most probably do his utmost to prevent the execution of it.”—“I have the same idea, (said Mrs. Rivers,) for which reason I shall always endeavour to divert his attention whenever he is in company.” Thus did this imprudent mother not only encourage, but advise duplicity; and under the false idea that she was planning schemes for the happiness of her child, perverted her principles, and taught her to look on deceit and the most unjustifiable means of procuring an advantageous settlement, as a wise and prudential manœuvre. The arrival of Sir William in the carriage gave them the highest delight, Miss Rivers flattered herself, she should soon become the mistress of it, and again figure in the great world she had been so unwillingly excluded from: every attraction was called forth, and, with a face dressed in smiles and tender languishments, she made her appearance in the drawing-room—The Baronet was transported at seeing her, she was more beautiful than ever, and he warmly congratulated himself on the felicity of attending her to Kensington gardens; no objections being made, he handed the ladies into the carriage, after they had made a slight alteration in their head dress, and

and they drove off in high spirits. The park and gardens were crowded; as they walked round, they were met by several young men of fashion who had formerly been intimate with the Rivers's; but they were no longer fashionable people, they could give no routs, nor balls, the loss of fortune was the grave of all their imputed good qualities and former consequence; a transient glance and a cool bow were all the demands they could now make on the fashionable world; even the ladies from whose humanity some little efforts towards good breeding might have been expected scarcely condescended to notice them, or if they did, looks of mingled pity and contempt too plainly evinced their ungenerous ideas.—What a lesson to the thoughtless and extravagant, when they see that to riches only they owe their present consequence, and that the very methods they take to distinguish themselves and obtain admittance into what is called the best company, assuredly terminates in ruin and disgrace, and that when they have lavished away their fortune, injured their family, and destroyed their health, to procure the applause of the vain and unthinking part of mankind, the contempt, the ingratitude, the chilling civility they meet with, when no longer able to procure pleasure to others, demonstrates, better than a thousand lectures on the subject, that to exceed your income, either to gratify your own vanity, or administer to the folly and vanity of others, is the direct road to bitter repentance and the contempt of the world. Mrs. and Miss Rivers felt a thousand pangs, and scarcely could the politest attention of Sir William compensate for the mortification of seeing themselves unnoticed by their former acquaintance; however, they were soon after

joined by Lord Stormer and two or three other gentlemen for a round or two, which enabled them to rally their spirits against they were conveyed to Stanhope-street; where their reception was so truly friendly as to give the warmest hopes of success in their schemes. They were not indeed much pleased with the arrival of Colonel Minors, they observed he watched them closely, and seemed little disposed to pay attention to Mrs. Rivers, who treated him with extreme politeness; a short time threw a damp on the spirits of the party; Sir Edward and Lady Stanley were announced; Lady Stanley having called in the morning, Lady Beaumont had engaged them for the day, and their arrival was as unexpected, and as little desired by Sir William as by the Rivers's and Colonel Minors; mutual compliments being exchanged and the company seated, Lady Stanley told Mrs. Rivers she was glad to hear business (which she hoped was of no unpleasant nature) would detain her some time longer in Town, that her friends might have the pleasure of seeing her. Conscious of the motives that detained her, Mrs. Rivers could not help blushing as she returned the compliment; artful and confident as she was, that inward monitor, which cannot always be silenced, threw her into a confusion, which the ladies good naturedly supposed was owing to her embarrassments, and therefore changed the subject and redoubled their kindness and attention. Not so was the Colonel deceived, the looks of the young lady and the behaviour of the mother convinced him of what he before suspected, that a deep-laid plan was formed to engage the affections of Sir William Beaumont, and was in fact the only business which kept them in Town; as he observed

served the Baronet appeared really fond of Miss Rivers, he secretly determined she should be the dupe of her own folly, and increase his consequence with the man she wished to detach from him — The dinner hours passed with a mutual desire of pleasing, and it being opera night, an adjournment to the Hay-market was proposed by Sir Edward Stanley and accepted with pleasure by the company — Lady Stanley mentioned the arrival of their old neighbours, Mr. and Mrs. Warner in Town the preceding evening; Lady Beaumont expressed her satisfaction at this intelligence, and the ladies agreed to call on their friends the following morning — At the proper hour they repaired to the opera, and here Sir William experienced a surprise and delight beyond his most romantic expectations; he had neither eyes nor ears for any thing but the entertainment and brilliancy of the house; for the first time he confessed the power of music, and even the charming Miss Rivers could scarcely obtain a word or glance from him; at first she was much picqued, but consoled herself by reflecting, that as the novelty wore off, the attraction would become less, whilst *her* power of charming would be strengthened daily; and she determined to lose no opportunity of increasing her consequence. When the opera ended Lady Beaumont invited her company to return and sup with her, which was generally declined; Lady Stanley politely offered to set Mrs. Rivers down, and, late as it was, Sir William intended to accompany the Colonel, but that gentleman had measures to observe, it was necessary to keep on terms of civility with Lady Beaumont; there was something in that Lady's countenance which inspired him with awe; conscious of his sinister designs, he thought she read his

his very soul ; and therefore he told Sir William it was too late for their engagement that evening, but trusted he might depend on seeing him early the following one—this the other most readily promised, and taking leave of the company returned with his mother. The Colonel repaired to Brooks's; on his entering the room Lord Stormer eagerly enquired for his *friend*; such is the prostituted name made use of to express the gamblers companion; the men, who under that sacred name ensnares the affections of an unhappy woman from a deserving husband; or an innocent daughter from an indulgent tender parent; such are the friendships of men of the world! The Colonel accounted for the absence of Sir William, and their plan was settled for the following evening. The next morning the Colonel hastened at an early hour to Stanhope-street, the Baronet was at breakfast; after the customary chit-chat, Minors suddenly asked Sir William how he liked Miss Rivers? the question confused him at first, but recollecting himself, “ I think her a very charming girl, (said he,) and I feel much compassion for her situation.”—“ Why faith, I believe her situation so desperate that she would thank any generous fellow who would take her out on't; as to the figure they make *now*, it can last but a very short time, therefore I suppose the mother brought her to market for the best bidder.” “ I don't understand you,” replied Sir William. “ Perhaps not, (said the Colonel, laughing;) you are not much acquainted with the manœuvres of such provident ladies, but I can see plainly that's the scheme; she's a good fine girl, and could I afford to keep her in a style, perhaps I should be a candidate.” “ I do not comprehend you in the least, do you mean

mean you cannot afford to marry her?" "Marry her (retorted the Colonel, in a tone of surprise,) I have no such idea I promise you;—Who the devil would think of marrying a girl brought up in such an expensive style, without a shilling? No, no, she's to be had on much more agreeable terms depend on it, otherwise they would remain quietly in the country and accustom their ideas to their situation. But you heard Mrs. Rivers say, business detained them in Town—O, yes, I guess their business perfectly—to be frank with you, Sir William, their designs at present are levelled against you, and as you must shortly get yourself that pretty appendage to a young man of fortune, a mistress, if you like the girl you may as well give into the scheme; perhaps, she may be less expensive than one from the opera or playhouse." "I am all astonishment; (cried Sir William,) I took Miss Rivers for a most respectable young woman."—"And the mother (said the Colonel interrupting him,) for a most *virtuous* lady." "Indeed I thought so, and surely the Stanleys must have that opinion of them, or they never would countenance them, or suffer Lady Beaumont to cultivate their acquaintance."—"The Stanleys, my friend, are what you call good sort of people, not ready to believe the reports of the world, entertain high sentiments respecting compassion, humanity, and such obsolete ideas, and therefore ready to pity persons they call unfortunate. Mrs. Rivers has been a gay woman in every sense of the word, with art enough to preserve appearances, and impose on such people as the Stanleys; but I speak from authority, and assure you, once more, you may have the girl if you play your cards well; but take care you are not duped by the cunning of the

the mother, and pretended reserve of the daughter."—"Duped! (repeated the Baronet, his pride mounting to his face,) no; novice as I am in the arts of mankind, I am not to be duped; I thank you, however, Colonel, for your friendly communication, and shall be well guarded against their designs."—"Their design, (said Minors,) I can see plainly is to draw you into an honorable connection, a marriage forsooth! a country gentleman unacquainted with the Town, was fair game, and certainly might afford a prospect of success—but, come, let us call in Green-street, and see how they appear to you after this developement of their characters."—"Upon my word, (replied Sir William,) I shall scarcely know how to treat them."—"Why, just as usual, (answered the other;) if you don't like Miss Rivers drop the acquaintance, if you do, she is as free for you as another; unless you have sworn constancy to Delia, Phillis, or some rosy milk-maid."—"No, (replied Sir William, laughing,) I have no such engagements, and therefore am ready to attend you."—They soon walked off, and when Lady Beaumont would have sent a message to ask her son's company to call on Mr. and Mrs. Warner, she found he was gone with his constant companion—she felt much chagrined; but there was no remedy and she was obliged to set off without him.

Sir William and the Colonel arrived together in Green-street, to the great mortification of the ladies, who wished the latter a hundred miles off; however, having succeeded in impressing Sir William's mind with ideas much to their disadvantage, the Colonel relaxed in his attention and flirted away with Mrs. Rivers, giving the others all the opportunity they could wish for—

for—Miss Rivers, although she threw the greatest encouragement into her countenance, and behaved with much freedom of manners, had something in her figure which inspired respect, and to a man unhackneyed in the arts of the sex, might have challenged esteem—the Baronet, when he reflected on the intelligence he had received of her designs, felt a degree of contempt, at the same time that he was captivated with her beauty; but vanity, of which he had a competent share, induced him to believe Miss Rivers felt a partiality in his favor, and he was very ready to profit by the discovery—he received an invitation from her to tea which was accepted; and he was not sorry the Colonel was not included in the desired visit. When the gentlemen quitted them, the mother and daughter warmly congratulated themselves on their success, and every plan was formed that could possibly ensure the completion of their wishes; it was determined to lose no opportunities, and the mother was to affect ignorance of her daughter's attachment, the better to preserve appearances with Lady Beaumont.—Mean time the Colonel was rallying Sir William on his conquest, assuring him he was in a fair way to commence a man of the ton; for, without a fashionable connection he would be nobody—they parted with a promise of meeting early in the evening, and Sir William returned home just in time to dress for dinner—his mother was there before him, she regretted not having his company to see their friends, but hoped no engagement would prevent his dining with Mr. Warner next day; he consented, but with visible reluctance, he had now no relish for such company as the Stanleys and Warners, they did very well in the country, but in London

don they were sober hum-drum people—Lady Beaumont saw a wonderful alteration in his air and manners, a carelessness towards herself, and a restlessness when in the house, this was what she most dreaded; to lose the little influence she had hoped to maintain over him in so short a period, seemed to foretel a total deprivation of his affection and confidence—she had but one plan to pursue, that of being contented with his present conduct, and by avoiding any disagreeable reflections on his acquaintance, to engage him to be open in his communications, by which means she might be enabled to judge what his amusements and attachments were: in consequence of this resolution she appeared extremely cheerful, asked him no questions, and when he told her he was engaged to tea and afterwards to meet a party of friends, she only wished him much entertainment, having herself she said promised to accompany Lady Stanley to Mrs. Freemore's rout; “So you see, William, (continued she,) I am in danger of growing a dissipated old woman after having maintained for many years the character of a very prudent young one.”—he answered this little folly by saying, he was certain Lady Beaumont must ever retain a respectable character go where she pleased, and that he was happy she was inclined to find some amusement abroad.

The Baronet then hastened to his appointment with Miss Rivers, whom he found dressed in the most captivating style; the loves and graces were in every look and motion, and when, after tea, Mrs. Rivers *kindly* withdrew, the gentleman grew very warm and passionate in his expressions of admiration: the lady was too well pleased to affect disapprobation, and, in short, such a mutual good understanding took place

place in this one visit, that both were highly gratified; Miss Rivers looked forward with almost a degree of certainty to the possession of the Baronet's fortune, and he found equal pleasure in the hopes of being fondly beloved by so charming a girl as Miss Rivers: they parted with regret and a mutual desire to meet again the next day. Sir William, in high spirits, entered Brooks's, where he found his good friends and some others to whom he was introduced—after a little common-place chat, cards were called for, and Sir William, having been so fortunate, had neither resolution nor indeed inclination to decline play; he was seated at a table with three strangers, and at first fortune seemed to declare in his favour; he won near twenty guineas, his companions complimented his skill and knowledge of the game; he grew elated and proposed doubling the stakes; one of the gentlemen declined, and the Colonel, having just then finished his rubber, took the other's place; they played on for some time with different success, fortune often changed sides, but at length decided against Sir William and his partner; and, at breaking up the party, he found himself in debt above 500 guineas, besides about fifty pounds he began with.—He was thunderstruck, had no idea of risking so much money, and then found how insensibly a man is led on either to improve his good luck, or retrieve his losses. The Colonel affected to treat the matter very lightly.—“This sum is but trifling, Sir William:—they shall give you your revenge to-morrow evening, and perhaps good interest too.—Here's Lord Stormer has lost near 3000 guineas, he cares little about it; to-morrow or next night may bring it back again: Come, prithee don't lose your cheerfulness with
your

your money." Sir William endeavored to recover from his vexation and surprise; he grew ashamed to indulge repentance, and observing with how much indifference Lord Stormer and the others bore their losses, he endeavored to rally his spirits and assume a cheerfulness very foreign to his heart. Having given his note for the sums he had lost, and appointed to meet the same party the next evening, he returned to Stanhope-street, but not to rest—(The first deviation from rectitude is always attended with conscious remorse) feeling, that in slighting the counsel of his mother, he had engaged with a set who constantly were in the habits of gaming, that he had lost a considerable sum, and must either pursue the same plan to recover his property, perhaps lose more, or else give up the acquaintance, and forfeit all pretensions to a man of fashion, a name he was ambitious to obtain; doubt and uncertainty for some time rendered him irresolute; at one moment he was inclined to confess his folly to his mother and abjure his companions, but then he must expect the ridicule and contempt of all young men of spirit, and be condemned to the insipid society of the Stanleys, and such unfashionable people; this apprehension decided for him; any inconvenience could be endured sooner than contempt; his pride revolted against the idea of being thought a parsimonious country gentleman without taste or spirit; and, be the consequence what it might, he resolved to persevere in the same road the Colonel had chalked out for him, and let his mother rest in ignorance of the dangerous amusements he believed himself under a necessity of pursuing.—Having made up his mind, he endeavored to compose himself to rest, but passed the remainder of the night

in broken slumbers and terrifying visions.— (Thus it must ever be in the beginning of an ill course: no young persons can at first still that awful monitor within, which painfully reminds them of the follies they are guilty of? happy would it be if they had resolution to attend to it's dictates and pursue a different plan! but *slaves* to folly and fashion, unable to bear the ridicule of their worthless companions, and ambitious to shine in the more modish walks of life; they give up the approbation of their own hearts, submit to be the *dupes* of follies they at first despise, and gradually sink into that vortex of vice and dissipation which ruins their morals, destroys their health, and entails misery and remorse on a premature old age)—*There are no virtues so necessary to be inculcated into young minds as candour and firmness of mind.* Irresolution is the parent of vice; *that*, and dissimulation are too generally the consequences of a wrong education—too much indulgence of idle habits, or a strictness and severity which repels affection and confidence equally injure young and timid minds—let children be taught to judge of men and things with deliberation and propriety; let them have a decided opinion, and not weakly submit their sentiments to the caprice of others; at the same time, to avoid appearing obstinate or pertinacious, let them learn never to obtrude their judgment on subjects till called upon; they will soon get the better of that timidity, which is the consequence of a weak mind, and if they are encouraged in a love of truth, and taught to consider a parent as a friend and companion, if their ingenuous communications are applauded, and if advice is insinuated with gentleness and good humour; I will venture to affirm, children in general will be trained to a
love.

love of virtue and an abhorrence of duplicity and artifice, from which springs every vice that corrupts the heart. Unfortunately for Sir William Beaumont, he had been too much indulged, without any strength of judgment, he was decided in nothing, and although there was a natural degree of obstinacy and haughtiness in his disposition, yet, having no habits of stability or reason, he was at the mercy of every artful man who thought it worth while to cultivate his acquaintance, and render his propensities subservient to his designs. He arose in the morning unrefreshed, and when he appeared before his mother she was shocked to behold his pallid countenance.—“Ah, my son, (said she,) the irregularities of this town already have made ravages in your constitution:—Accustomed to the simplest mode of living and regular hours, you will soon fall a victim to what is called the pleasures of the town: indeed, my dear William, I am miserable to see you look so ill.”

“Really, madam, (replied he,) you afflict yourself unnecessarily: I am perfectly well, and have no other complaint than want of rest, and that will soon wear off—I find it impossible to observe particular hours in company; and custom will soon enable me to bear sitting up late.”—“I wish, (answered her ladyship) your health may not be sacrificed in the trial; but of that you must be the most competent judge; and, for your own sake, and for the sake of my happiness, I hope, if you find it endangered, that you will retreat in time.”—“Of that, madam, you may rest assured:—But how did you find our good friends the Stanleys *last evening*? were you amused at Mrs. Freemore’s rout?”—“I hope you will meet our friends perfectly well to day; though they complain that you neglect them

them—but as to amusement, it is past the time of life for me to be pleased with a croud, and I feel infinitely more happiness in spending a social hour with an old acquaintance, than in frequenting routs or crowded assemblies. I hope, however, you found entertainment in the party who deprived you of rest last night.” —“ O, yes, (answered he, somewhat confused,) I spent a delightful cheerful evening; but pray, madam, what is your dinner hour?” “ About five, (replied her ladyship,) and at that hour I suppose we may expect you;—You are already grown too polite (said she, with a smile,) to *accompany* your mother; and I do not wish to intrude on your engagements, having some of my own this morning: I am going into the city; shall I make your respects to the worthy Thornhills?” “ If you please, madam;” said the Baronet, (glad to be excused the visit, which inclination no longer prompted him to make.) They then separated; Sir William flew to Miss Rivers; he found her alone, eagerly expecting him; they enjoyed a long and very tender *tête-à-tête*, he was lavish in his professions of love and admiration, and it was impossible but a young woman, whose hopes were raised with an idea of possessing a good fortune with a very handsome young man, encouraged too by the advice of her parent, should shew all possible indulgence to him; it was hardly possible, under such circumstances, to observe that strict decorum every young woman who reverences herself should maintain in these dangerous *tête-à-têtes*; she could not avoid several little freedoms, which, from a fear of losing him, she did not repulse, and by that means strengthened the opinion Colonel Minors had endeavoured to inculcate, that she

was

was to be had on very easy terms; however, they were timely visited by Mrs. Rivers, who had purposed walked out to give the lovers the opportunity they had so well improved.—Sir William went away with visible reluctance, and Miss Rivers felt more than she dared express; he strolled into Hyde-park, and began to reflect on his situation; he was that evening to meet the party at Brooks's, if he redeemed his losses, all was very well, if not he must draw on his banker, 500*l.* was a large sum, Mr. Thornhill might very naturally mention it to his mother, and although he was entirely master of his fortune, yet, it was reasonable to suppose she would be surprised at his want of 500*l.* knowing he had taken up a hundred so lately, when in the city, and had no bills to pay—then Miss Rivers occurred—he was really fond of her, and if he succeeded in his designs on her person, he foresaw he must come down with very considerable sums to maintain her in the style she approved of, and where could these sums be procured? if he had any other banker than Mr. Thornhill there would be no difficulty, but that gentleman had a friendship for his mother, and consequently would acquaint her with any demands he might think extravagant.—Under these perplexing ideas, a smart blow on the shoulder roused him from his reverie, and the Colonel's voice for a moment dissipated his chagrin.—“What the devil, (cried he,) are you musing about? Why, you look like a methodist preacher, studying a discourse to open the purses of the old and superstitious to contribute to his support; prithee why so grave? I hope the trifling losses of last night occasion you no disquietude,—you are not afraid of Lady Beaumont's chiding? faith, you

you are too old to be in leading-strings now, I think—but perhaps the bright eyes of Miss Rivers have pierced your heart;—and the gipsy has art enough to see it, and affect cruelty”——

“Now that you have exhausted your conjectures, (said Sir William, smiling at his volubility,) I will candidly confess the cause of the reverie I was plunged into when you overtook me. I have many obligations to my mother; for my sake she refused many advantageous offers of marriage; and although I am now sensible the education she gave me was too confined, yet I know maternal fondness was the cause of all, and that on my conduct her happiness entirely depends.”——

“And so, (cries the Colonel, with a sneer, interrupting him,) you are to give up all amusements at your time of life from the apprehension of affronting mamma!—ha, ha, ha! why, Beaumont, thou hast a wonderful deal of self-denial, and high notions of duty indeed.”——

Sir William evidently abashed, and feeling mortified at the ridicule he had incurred, exclaimed, “You are mistaken, what I meant to say is this: I wish to spare my mother unnecessary pain; it happens, unfortunately, that my banker is in habits of intimacy with her, and I can draw for no considerable sum without the probability of its being communicated to her, and as she knows I can have no extraordinary demands for money she will instantly conclude my wants must be the consequence of play, and to that amusement she has such an insuperable aversion, and so frequently gives me cautions on the subject, that a supposition of the kind will make her very wretched.”——

“Well, then, (replied Minors) since you are so attentive to the peace of your mother, which, no doubt, is very proper, why

why cannot you contrive to spare her the knowledge of it?" "That's the very thing I wish for, if I could tell how."—"Have you no money in the bank?" "Yes, near twenty thousand pounds." "O, then the difficulty is obviated at once;—sell out a few hundreds or a thousand; 'tis true there will be a small loss attending it, but what is that trifle when put in competition with the peace of your mother, which you are so anxious to preserve?"—"Nothing, nothing," (replied Sir William,) joy dancing in his eyes at the removal of his difficulties. "I will about it immediately if you will give me instructions"—"Most readily (said the artful Colonel equally rejoiced by the hopes of sharing the twenty-thousand pounds) I will conduct you to a person who will soon transact the business." They hastened out of the park, took the first coach, and drove into the city, where the affair was soon settled, and Minors had the address to persuade his companion to sell out 2000 pounds to save himself both future trouble and expence. This business accomplished, they drove back in high spirits, and going through Bond-street Sir William stopped at Gray's, and purchased an elegant trinket which he intended as a present to Miss Rivers, to whom he found it too late to pay his morning devoirs a second time, having scarcely time to dress for dinner:—after engaging to meet the Colonel in the evening he hurried home and found his mother was returned, dressed and ready to go into the carriage: he promised soon to follow, and congratulated himself on not meeting her in the city, a danger which never occurred to him 'till it was past; and he felt heartily rejoiced he could contrive to accommodate his wants without applying to Mr. Thornhill.

Thornhill. When arrived in Stratford-Place, at the house of Mr. Warner, he met the most cordial reception—Mr. Warner merrily welcomed his emancipation from rusticity, and remarked, short as his time had been in Town, Sir William was wonderfully improved, and had already acquired the appearance of a man of the ton.—“Your wonder will cease, (said Sir Edward Stanley,) when you hear he is the pupil of Colonel Minors”—“Aye! (cried Mr. Warner) pray how came that acquaintance about?” “I am sorry to say, (replied the other) partly through my means; his intimacy with my relation, Lord Stormer, sometimes throws him in my way, and they contrived to join our party one evening at the theatre, and from thence we may date the beginning of the violent intimacy which has taken place between Minors and our young friend here,”—“My dear Sir William, (said Mr. Warner) take the advice of older men, who have paid for experience themselves and generously offer it to you without fee or reward; sudden friendships are often productive of repentance, seldom of satisfaction; mix with the world, enjoy its amusements, but be careful in the choice of your intimate companions; trust me there is more danger in the acquaintance of one unprincipled man, than in all the allurements which fashion and folly hold out to entice young minds:—Such a man.”—“Sir, (interrupted Sir William, with a degree of impatience next to rudeness,) you congratulated me just now on my escape from rusticity; I hope I am old enough to be permitted the choice of my companions; whenever I find any of them unworthy my notice, I have spirit enough to withdraw myself from their acquaintance.”—“Well, well, young gentleman,

gentleman, (replied Mr. Warner in a good humoured tone,) I had no design to offend you; I only gave you the opinion of an old man; but I ought to have had sense enough to remember, *that* has very little weight with a young one, and that most folks chuse to purchase experience at their own cost."—"I am sure, my dear Sir, (said Lady Beaumont, not a little hurt at her son's petulance,) that William will always be grateful to his good friends for their advice, which he must be sensible can only be intended for his benefit." I do assure you, added she smiling, old as I am, I have been absent so many years from Town that I want an adviser and regulator too, as much as a young country Miss, for wonderful alterations have taken place in customs and fashions since I resided in St. James's Square twenty years ago. Twenty years! replied Mr. Warner, why, madam, there has been a hundred revolutions in fashion within that period; there is one most excellent mode at present for which I feel very grateful, what may that be, said Lady, Stanley; a renovation of youth my lady, we have no old men or women now, dress is so happily adopted by all ages, that none but a curious impertinent fellow, that presumes to thrust his head in your face, can distinguish between old and young folks.—You must know that I like very well to look at a pretty woman, notwithstanding all my fear of conjugal lectures, and this very morning strolled down thro' Hyde-park to the Mall; before me was a very smart dressed woman in a white jacket, I think you call it, short petticoats, silk shoes and stockings, a beaver hat on one side of a well dressed head—a footman behind—a devilish smart woman thinks I, so quickened my pace, overtook

overtook her and turned to view the face of this captivating female, when, O dire disappointment, the loves and graces were fled, and in their room presented me with a set of hard features, marked with the small-pox, and on which at least sixty good years of winter and summer had browned, but which now was brightened up with a dab of rouge on each cheek. Disgusted and displeased I walked off, and although many similar temptations assailed me in the park I contented myself with viewing the pretty faces I met, without following any more. But, pray, my good sir, said Lady Stanley, is there no lures thrown out by the gentlemen? you were talking of being grateful just now for the little distinction made in dress, yet to that you owe your disappointment, and who knows but some gay female, attracted by the air and dress of Mr. Warner, has suffered equal mortification to what you describe. Your servant, madam, cried Mr. Warner, it was too fair an opportunity for your ladyship to neglect having a fling at me; but to confess the truth, I think the French mode we have adopted of keeping off old age in appearance as long as we can, a very good notion; let us be cheerful in temper and smart in our dress and then the young folks won't be ashamed of our company. Dinner was now announced, which gave a different turn the conversation: but Lady Beaumont observed, with concern, that her son looked thoughtful, eat little, and seemed not disposed to talk, though frequently addressed by the company.

After dinner, and the ladies retired to the drawing-room, Mrs. Warner said, the last six months had amazingly improved Sir William;
 " he

“ he is really a charming young man, (continued she), and, I hope, will make a proper alliance; with his person and fortune he may look up to any rank.”—“ True, (replied Lady Stanley;) but there are very few young men of fortune who think of marrying early in life; and, I believe, unequal alliances were never less frequent than at present; in general, interested motives have triumphed over love; sentiment and passion seldom cement fashionable unions; rank, riches, and convenience are the chief inducements to marriage.” “ I went this morning into the city (said Mrs. Warner) to call on an old school-fellow, whose daughter was last week happily united to the man of her choice, after some difficulties which have reflected much honor on both, and which I will relate if you will permit me:” The ladies having assured her she would do them pleasure, she proceeded as follows—“ My young friend, Louisa, is the daughter of a merchant in the city, of good fortune and connections, but a very large family and some losses by the late American war, would not admit of his daughters expecting more than very moderate provisions;—there were five of them, all agreeable and accomplished. Louisa was the second, her person particularly pleasing and elegant, with a sweetness of disposition I never saw excelled.—Henry, the only son of one of our most opulent bankers, grew passionately fond of her, nor was she insensible to his passion, but, with that sincerity and prudence which all young people ought to observe, she acquainted her mother with their mutual partiality. My friend instantly saw the many impediments to their union: Henry’s father, she was persuaded, would expect much superior advantages in a daughter—
in-

in-law, added to which, party-disputes had thrown the two fathers at a distance from all intimacy or probability of connection. Louisa's father was a violent partizan of Mr. Fox's, the other as strongly attached to Mr. Pitt; she represented to her daughter all those obstacles which must impede any union taking place, and advised her gradually to decline an intimacy which might prove destructive to her future peace. Conscious that she had received the advice of her best friend, Louisa determined implicitly to obey her mother, and, whatever her heart felt, to be guided by reason only. Henry soon perceived the change, and the first opportunity eagerly besought her to tell him how he had incurred her displeasure.—With the utmost candour she repeated her mother's advice, declaring her own resolution to abide by it; and entreated him to think of her no more, and to drop all further intimacy, which could only be productive of pain to both. Henry heard her with attention and the severest affliction; he had but one reply to make; he was an only son, 'twas impossible, he thought, his father could doom him to wretchedness, and he was determined to make the experiment:—he flew to his father and opened his heart without the least reserve.—Astonishment and vexation overwhelmed the old gentleman; he had for some time been projecting a match for his son with a lady of rank, and though not of a fortune equal to her rank, yet much superior to what Louisa could expect: having recovered himself, he reproached his son in the bitterest terms for his poverty of spirit, refused his consent, nay, assured him of his everlasting displeasure, and the

the curse of a parent if he did not instantly break off all acquaintance with Louisa and her family, the father of which he detested.—The poor young man quitted him in an agony of grief; above any idea of duplicity, he wrote Louisa the event of his unfortunate application, and knowing the rectitude of her sentiments he dared not solicit her future favor; her answer I have a copy of, which I will read.

LOUISA TO HENRY.

“ You have this day afforded me the most convincing proof of your esteem, and given me consequence in my own eyes, by shewing I was not deceived in the opinion I had formed of your principles. The duty we owe our parents is the first duty in life, all others should be subservient to it; and what is the transient pain we feel from the disappointment of our wishes to the heartfelt delight of knowing we have obliged the Authors of our Being! Preserve, dear Henry, that rectitude of principle which will ensure your future happiness; and consider, the tranquillity of your father is in your hands; ’tis not enough to *obey* his command, you must prove to him, by an exertion of cheerfulness, that you find *pleasure* in so doing.—How great will be your reward in a self-approving mind! your friend, Louisa, will be gratified by the esteem of a man so excellent; and to consider her henceforth as a warm and disinterested friend is the highest compliment you can pay her judgment. My mother desires me to acquaint you, your conduct has given you an additional claim to her esteem.”

I leave

I leave you to judge, my dear friends, if this letter did not add to the regrets of the unfortunate Henry.—Several months elapsed; and though they now and then saw each other in public they never trusted themselves with any conversation; but his pale countenance and fragile form too plainly evinced his heart was ill at ease. About three months ago Louisa received a letter from her aunt, a sister of her mother's, who was very greatly settled in the East-Indies; she had buried an only daughter, and being God-mother to Louisa, wrote to intreat she would supply that loss and hasten to her; promising her a very brilliant establishment:—the father and mother though loath to part with a child so amiable, yet, having several children, conceived they had no right to withhold their consent to a measure which seemed calculated for her advantage, and as the governor's lady was going over, they could form no excuse for delaying the desired visit; her mother indeed had another reason, she saw Louisa suffered much on Henry's account, and hoped the voyage and absence might conduce to the tranquillity of both.—Every preparation was made, and the news soon reached Henry's ears;—distracted by the thought of losing her, he again sought his father, poured out his complaints and entreated his consent to his union with Louisa; but all was vain, his father, greatly enraged, drove him from his sight with violence; and poor Henry retired to his apartment, a prey to the most poignant grief and despair; a slow nervous fever preyed on his constitution, and reduced him to the extremest weakness—mean time the day arrived that was to separate the lovers, in all probability, for ever: Louisa had heard with

much concern of Henry's situation, and altho^o her feelings were little short of his, her resolution enabled her to disguise them, and the separation from her parents was all that appeared to afflict her: On the morning of her embarkation she sent him this letter.

“ 'Tis only this moment I have resolution to break through a promise once given, never to hold any future correspondence with my much valued friend, Henry; but now, when about to quit England, perhaps for ever, when taking leave of all my dearest friends, sure I may without reproach, bestow my best wishes on one whose thousand good qualities have endeared him to my heart, and who has no fault but one; yet that is a capital one.—There is no merit, dear Henry, in performing a duty—to obey our parents is most certainly the strongest duty—but, if that obedience costs us no sacrifices, where is the debt we pay for all those years of tender anxiety which accompanied our childhood to the present hour?—Believe me, dear Henry, that on the bed of sickness one hour of retrospection, which can convey the pleasing idea of having given pleasure to a parent, by a voluntary cheerful sacrifice of a youthful inclination, will more than compensate for the painful effort; but to wound a father's feelings by an appearance of sorrow and regret, after having complied with his wishes, is cruel and ungenerous:—exert your fortitude, your reason;—remember what you owe to your father, to yourself, and to me.—Do you suppose it cost me nothing to resign the flattering hope of being yours? if you can suppose it, you must think me unworthy your smallest regard; if, on the contrary, I felt
equally

equally with yourself, will you be out-done in fortitude by a weak female? Ah, Henry, recollect yourself, prove yourself worthy Louisa's love and esteem; return to your father's arms with cheerfulness and resolution, exert yourself to prove the pleasure of obeying his commands is superior to all other considerations;—neither let your compliance with his wishes be a partial one, unite yourself to some amiable woman whom he may think worthy his beloved son, and experience in such an union that happiness which must result from a connection pleasing to all parties, void of regret or self-reproach.—My dearest friend, adieu! be assured I shall be ever warmly interested in every event which honour and happiness may dictate for your repose. Consider me as a friend who will love the amiable woman that shall render Henry and his father happy.”

LOUISA.

This letter was delivered to Henry in the presence of his father; knowing it to be Louisa's writing, he was scarce able to retire to the window, and with trembling hands, broke the seal;—before he had quite gone through it, the letter fell to the ground, and throwing himself into a chair, he almost instantly fainted: his father, very much alarmed, rang the bell for assistance, and taking up the letter put it in his pocket; as soon as poor Henry recovered his senses, his father taking his hand, requested to know what had occasioned his disorder, and producing the letter, “Here is the paper you dropped, (said he,) may I be permitted to examine it's contents?” “Yes sir, (replied Henry,) read it and then judge of my feelings and the value of

that treasure now lost to me for ever."—He covered his face with his handkerchief whilst his father read the letter with attention; and, after a few minutes silence, turning suddenly to his son. "Harry, (cried he,) I will no longer oppose your wishes; the writer of this letter deserves a diadem; go, my son, fly to the house, prevent her voyage, and tell your Louisa, a father waits to clasp her to his breast." Joy was almost as fatal in its effects as grief had been; sudden transitions are difficult to bear—poor Henry could not find words—he emphatically kissed his father's hand in silence, and flew out of the room. A few minutes brought him to the house of his Louisa—alas, she had set off for Gravesend four hours before;—almost raving, he could scarce make the mourning mother sensible of his errand; he returned in agonies to his father, who consented to accompany him immediately to Gravesend; they rode post with the utmost speed, but when arrived were told she was already on board and the ship under weigh; the sufferings of Henry are not to be expressed, however, a cutter was hired instantly, and without taking any refreshment they set sail after the ship; they met a boat returning with the father and brother of Louisa; they hailed them, and in a few moments explained their design, to the utter astonishment of the father, who was entirely ignorant of the whole transaction: they turned the boat and accompanied the lovers; fortunately the ship had been retarded by the drawing up of one of the anchors, they came along side of her, and in an instant Henry was on board: Louisa had retired to the cabin with the Governor's lady: her brother prudently stopped Henry, and descending into the cabin, saw

saw her drowned in tears; surprised at seeing him again—"my dear brother! (exclaimed she,) what is the matter? where is my father? surely I saw you row from the ship!—My father is on deck,—prepare yourself my dear sister, for a most delightful surprise; your voyage is suspended;"—before he could utter another word, Henry flew into the cabin, and overcome with joy, fatigue, and a variety of emotions, he fell at her feet, deprived of sense. Terror and astonishment fixed her to her chair motionless, and the same instant, before she had recovered the use of her faculties, she found herself in the arms of Henry's father, who pressed her to his bosom by the endearing name of daughter! Henry began to shew signs of life, and Louisa, thus authorised by his father, pressing his hand, repeatedly called him her dear, dear Henry.—A flood of tears preserved her from fainting, and, in a few minutes, both were restored to a little composure.—"My dear, my worthy girl! (said the old Gentleman,) pardon me for all the distress I have given you, I knew not your value; but the young woman who could generously give up her own happiness to the will of a parent she had no reason to esteem, and from principle alone plead against her wishes, deserves to be happy; and happy you shall be, if the warmest affection and esteem of your Henry and his father can make you so—I shall now go to the captain and prepare for your removal."—

Matters were soon settled on board, and the happy lovers returned with their parents to London, where they found my friend in agonies of suspense; a few days re-established Henry's health, and they were speedily united.

This

This morning I paid them a visit, and the old gentleman, Henry's father, gave me all particulars, and permitted me to take a copy of of the letters; he absolutely doats on Louisa, and has enabled his son to make a settlement, not equal to her deserts and generous self-denial, he says, but such as he intended for the quality lady he once wished to call his daughter.

—"Thus, ladies, I have concluded my little narrative, and, I dare say, you are both charmed that the lovers are so fortunate."

"My dear Mrs. Warner, cried lady Stanley, you must introduce me to your Louisa; I adore her;" and I also, added Lady Beaumont:

amiable girl! she well deserves her happiness

—What a triumph was her's, to owe her felicity to the efforts of virtue."

"Well, said Mrs. Warner, I hope soon to be favoured with a visit from her; and you, ladies, shall certainly be of the party; I should add, that her parents have written an account to India of Louisa's marriage; and one of the other daughters goes out next season to supply her place."

When tea was over, cards were proposed, and the gentlemen summoned to attend: Sir William, though not without some confusion, apologized for being under an indispensable engagement, which obliged him to break from such an agreeable party.

"I thought, William, (said Lady Beaumont, with some severity in her manner,) you told me yesterday, you had no engagement to preclude your attendance on our good friends here." "For the dinner hours I certainly had not, madam; but, I did not understand the evening was included in the invitation."

"Make no difficulties, my young friend, (said Mr. Warner,)

consider

consider these doors as always open to you and, go and come without ceremony or restraint." Sir William felt abashed at this kindness, which his mother acknowledged in warm terms of gratitude; he bowed his thanks, and, taking leave of the ladies, rejoiced at his escape from such dull company. He hastened to Brookes's, and found his former companions, with some others, who were deeply engaged at play; having soon formed a party, fortune, as usual, changed sides alternately, but it was thought politic he should this night be the winner, and, at the breaking up of the party, he was about forty guineas in pocket, which elated him greatly, and inspired hopes that he should soon recover his losses; consequently they found no difficulty in prevailing on him to promise meeting them every evening, either before or after any other engagement. It was four in the morning when he returned home, and the different occurrences of the day engaged his thoughts for two or three hours after he retired, and therefore he was scarcely settled to sleep when Lady Beaumont had her breakfast; painful was the intelligence which accompanied it; but she saw there was no remedy but patience for the present. About twelve the Baronet awaked, and getting his breakfast, hurried away, eager to see Miss Rivers, and present her with the trinket he had purchased; he found her alone in an elegant *disfhabile*; she had been disordered by a violent head-ach, and looked so soft and languishing, that he was quite in raptures. The present was received with an apparent reluctance, so as to make Sir William believe he was the person obliged by her acceptance of it. She informed him,

him, they had received an invitation to dine and spend the day with Lady Stanley, but that not being well enough to go herself, she had with some difficulty prevailed on her mother to go there in the evening without her; “Consequently, (added she smiling,) I must spend a dull evening at home.” “Will you permit me, my dear Miss Rivers, to intrude myself, and endeavor to enliven those solitary hours?” She politely thanked him, but apprehended it might interfere with some more agreeable engagement. A very passionate reply on his side, and her acquiescence, settled the business. After passing two or three hours to their mutual satisfaction, he returned to dine with his mother, and resolved to write an excuse to his friends, and for one night postpone the recovery of his money for a more pleasing engagement.

At table, he was all spirits and gaiety; his mother, pleased at his good humour, avoided taking notice of his late hours, but asked him, in a laughing way, if his acquaintance with Colonel Minors and Lord Stormer had not introduced him to some agreeable females yet. “No, indeed, (replied he,) I have not the pleasure of knowing any young lady but Miss Rivers.”—“Well then, (said her ladyship,) if you have no engagement for the evening on Friday next, here is a card from Lady Mandeville (a relation of Sir Edward Stanley’s,) to invite us to a rout at her house on that day, and I am informed her ladyship’s parties are always most brilliantly attended—have you any objection to going? I must send an answer this evening.” Sir William being in high good-humour, and desirous of extending his
his

his acquaintance, gave a ready assent, and an answer was returned accordingly. After dinner, he strolled down to James's Street, and calling in at the Thatched-house, was agreeably surprised to meet there Lord Stormer and two or three of his former party. After a pretty free circulation of the glass, they repaired to the billiard-table: with this game Sir William was entirely unacquainted, and consequently only looked on; but he was so exceedingly amused as to express a regret he could not be a partaker in the diversion: "Nothing so easily learnt, my dear Sir, (said Mr. Horner;) if you will do me the honor to take a few lessons from me, I engage in a week to make you master of the game." The Baronet accepted this polite offer, and it was agreed to meet there every morning at eleven for an hour or two; his friends warmly pressed him to accompany them to the play, and from thence to their usual place of rendezvous, but this invitation he had just resolution enough to decline, and to keep his engagement with Miss Rivers. One of the gentlemen having lost two bottles of claret, he was compelled to partake of them, which, added to what he had drank before, exasperated his spirits to a very high pitch. Having parted with his friends, he almost flew to Miss Rivers, who was alone, and received him with an air of tender satisfaction. Now, he thought, was the time to try his influence: Miss Rivers, at first gently repulsed him, but he continued offending, begging pardon, incurring anger, and then again imploring forgiveness, till, in one unhappy hour, was the unfortunate Miss Rivers undone.—O,

that young women would peruse the excellent lessons of the inimitable Richardson, and remember, "That the woman who does not properly resent initiatory freedoms, is lost." O, that, they would early learn, that no man who really admires and respects them would dare address them with improper liberties—the air of respect, the distant awe and faltering tongue characterise the real lover, not the "rattling tongue of saucy eloquence." nor the presuming freedom which lessens respect and diminishes their consequence. Poor Miss Rivers! a victim to artifice, duplicity, and to the imprudent advice of an ill-judging parent.—Unfortunate woman! how are your schemes defeated, how do all your arts and contrivances recoil on yourself, and blast your hopes for ever!—but such must ever be the fate of premeditated deceit; candour only and an ingenuous heart can stand the test of time and accidents. The hour of delusion past, Miss Rivers felt the horrors of her situation. She flew from the arms of Sir William in the most poignant distress; he caught her gown as she was leaving the room, besought her pardon for the past and renewed his vows of unalterable love: she turned to him, and with a look of anguish, which froze his soul, "I upbraid you not, sir, (cried she,) my *own folly* has undone me, and 'tis fit I should be the sufferer—let me never see you more; I have deserved the evils that *have* befallen me, and bitter self-reproach must be the portion of my future days."—She broke from him and retired to another room—he found it was in vain to expect her return, and departed under a train of the most perplexing and disagreeable sensations—his feet moved mechanically towards
Brookes's,

Brookes's, and his presence so unexpected, was an agreeable surprise to his friends. The observant Colonel presently saw something extraordinary had happened, there was a degree of seriousness and agitation in Sir William's appearance and manner not at all common.—“How came we to have the pleasure of seeing you this evening? (said he in an ironical tone) is Lady Beaumont engaged in a private party, or has the lovely Miss Rivers discarded you in a pretended fit of anger?” This last conjecture touched the string which vibrated to his heart, and not having yet acquired that fashionable *non-challance* to affect total indifference to the most interesting matters, the change in his countenance convinced the Colonel *all* was not right; suspending his curiosity for the present, he pressed him to play a rubber;—unhappy from his own reflections, he readily complied, and playing inattentively he lost considerably without even knowing what he lost 'till he was roused at the breaking up of the party, by finding his debts were seven hundred and fifty pounds:—this effectually brought him to his senses; shocked at the loss of so large a sum, he turned to the Colonel, who had been his partner.—“How is this, Colonel? (cried he) I thought we only played five guineas the rubber”—“At first (answered his friend with an air of mortification) it was so; but our evil genius prompted us to double on, in hopes of covering in our losses, till we are completely fleeced:—and where the devil to raise seven hundred pounds I know not;—I have over-drawn my agent and can't get a shilling there.”—Pho! (cried Mr. Horner) make no difficulties—Your note
for

for one month, or even three, will do both for yourself and Sir William.”—“ I am obliged to you, sir, (replied the Baronet) but I have the money by me, and certainly shall discharge the debt to-morrow.” On quitting the room the Colonel followed him : “ My dear friend, what is the matter ? you have been out of spirits the whole evening and so curfedly inattentive, that I am certain I owe the loss of seven hundred pounds solely to your bad play.” “ I am very sorry for it ; (answered Sir William ;) and as I am conscious your reproach is just, I must beg to consider the whole debt as mine ; ’tis not right you should be the sufferer by my carelessness.”—“ Neither shall *you* by your generosity ; (replied the artful Colonel ;) but if you can conveniently lend me the money and take my note yourself, I would sooner be obliged to you than any man living ; but, I protest, I will have it on no other terms.”—“ You are welcome to it on any terms you please,” was the answer.—“ May I (said the Colonel,) presume on your friendship so much as to enquire what particular distress has run away with your spirits, and played the devil with us this evening ? shall I guess, and, without being a conjurer, suppose Miss Rivers a party concerned ?” “ She is indeed, (replied the Baronet, with a sigh,) I wish I had never seen her.”—“ What, the cunning gypsey affects cruelty does she ? prithee don’t be melancholy ; ’tis all artifice, believe me ; she wants to draw you in ; and that mother of her’s is as cunning as the devil, but turn the tables upon them ; affect indifference in your turn, and the game will be in your hands in less than a week.”—Indeed, Colonel, you know no-
thing.

thing of the matter, (said Sir William, peevishly.)

Minors saw by this there was a secret, and, by dint of *perseverance*, and a thousand questions, he at length drew from him an account of the whole affair. “And is this (cried Minors) such a wonderful sad business as to make you out of spirits? Why, thou strange creature! any other man would be out of his wits with transport.” —“Really, (said Sir William,) her distress wounded me to the very soul.” —“Distress! Ha, ha, ha; The old stale trick!—but I forgive you, you are yet a novice: Prithee give up such simple ideas. Would a modest girl, who had a respect for herself, or her character, invite such a *tête à tête* with a young fellow? Certainly not. I believe the lady might not intend matters should have been carried so far, until she had obtained a good settlement, and from her disappointment and vexation arose the distress you talk of, and not from injured virtue or violated modesty, or she would have avoided, not courted, such opportunities.” “And do you indeed think, (said Sir William, with a look of satisfaction) that the want of a settlement was the only cause of her vexation?” “To be sure I do (answered the other;) write her a letter to-morrow with an offer of three or four hundred a year, and a reconciliation will soon take place.” They parted with much cordiality, and Sir William, finding great relief from the advice of the Colonel, was very well disposed to shew his gratitude in any way useful to him. The Colonel, mean time, was delighted with the secret communicated to him; he dreaded, lest the artifices of the mother and daughter should have affected a matrimonial connection,

connexion, which would have ruined his designs; but now that he saw the game in his own hands, three or four hundred a year was a trifle which might well be spared out of Sir William's fortune; Miss Rivers would prevent his thoughts from fixing on any other lady, and the Colonel knew he might derive a thousand advantages to himself from being intrusted with the secret. Thus, with mutual satisfaction, the gentlemen repaired to rest, where we will leave Sir William, tormented with broken slumbers and unpleasant visions, to enquire after the unhappy Miss Rivers.

CH A P. IX.

REFLECTION AND REPENTANCE.

THE moment Sir William left the house, she threw herself on her bed in inexpressible agonies. This unhappy young creature, though brought up in idleness and dissipation, had no propensity to vice; dress, fashion, and frivolity had been the business of her life, and 'tis easy to conceive what a young person must feel, deprived at once of every amusement, and treated with a supercilious contempt by her former

mer companions. Yet, with a prudent and affectionate parent, she might in time have been reconciled to her situation; but Mrs. Rivers was eternally regretting the loss of her former pleasures, and instead of finding out some rational mode of employing time, or endeavouring, by cheerfulness and resignation to divert the chagrin of her daughter, she was always busied in devising plans to recover their former elegance, encouraging her daughter in laying snares for the opulent gentlemen in the country, and when she came to town, and by accident got introduced to Lady Beaumont, she fancied she saw all her fairy visions realized, persuaded her daughter to act as she directed, without once considering the improper situations the poor girl must be thrown into; but looking on Sir William as a novice, easily inflamed, and as easily drawn into a marriage from motives of love alone, she neither regarded decorum, nor attended to consequences, only looking forward to the accomplishment of her wishes of once more being enabled to figure in high life. Alas! too many are the unthinking mothers of this age, who, by their own example, contradict every good precept their children may sometimes happen to receive from education, and by throwing them early into company, exhibiting them at every public place, in short, making the introduction of a daughter an excuse to cover their own fondness for dissipation, they give their children a taste for expensive pleasures and idle habits; and if, through a combination of unfortunate circumstances, they are deprived of the means to gratify their wishes, what are the consequences to be expected? Without any resources within themselves to procure happiness
or

or amusement, without any abilities, the exertion of which might afford a decent subsistence, they have recourse to the meanest expedients to support their pride, and too generally fall a sacrifice to their vanity and the artifices of mankind. The unfortunate Miss Rivers remained on the bed under all the horrors a feeling mind must endure from the late humiliating adventure, and without the power of consolation from reflection, for that condemned her. When Mrs. Rivers came home, she was informed, that her daughter was retired to bed very ill; greatly alarmed, she flew to her room, and found the unhappy victim of her pernicious precepts, under the most poignant distress; "Good heavens! Anna, (exclaimed she,) What is the matter? Are you ill! Has Sir William disappointed you?"—"O, would to Heaven he had! (answered Miss Rivers, raising herself, and looking wildly at her mother;) Would to Heaven I had never seen him! O, madam, (added she, catching her mother's hand,) I am undone, ruined for ever! Your advice has been my destruction!" Mrs. Rivers gave a shriek, and fell down on a chair unable to speak—"Pardon me, madam, (cried Miss Rivers, starting from the bed, pardon your wretched daughter for accusing you!—I only am to blame; I ought to have foreseen the consequences of trying to engage the affections of a young man so amiable; I am the victim to my own duplicity."—"Wicked, foolish girl! (said Mrs. Rivers, pushing her from her,) you have ruined all my hopes for ever. Where was your resolution, where the guard you ought to have held over your inclinations, when you fell a prey to a mere novice—a lad unhacknied in the world, unversed in the arts of

of seduction? Unworthy girl, you have destroyed my prospects for ever!"—"I know it all (answered the poor girl in a tone of despair;) I know I am ruined beyond reparation, and my conscience tells me I deserve it"—"Conscience! Your weakness, indeed, deserved it—talk not of conscience; but consider, if there is no way to remedy the evils you have brought upon me: Did he promise you marriage?" "No, (answered Miss Rivers) he never did, and this justice I must do him, I believe his intentions were innocent, and that he most sincerely repents the fatal weakness of the moment which rendered me forgetful of what I owe to myself and to virtue. But I am very ill, and cannot at present talk." She leant back on the bed, and appearing very faint, her mother assisted to undress and compose her; bidding her take comfort, as the evil was not, perhaps, without a remedy. The poor girl shook her head and sighed.

Mrs. Rivers began now to consider what was to be done; and after canvassing various plans which occurred to her, and weighing Lady Beaumont's character, and Sir William's little acquaintance with the artifices of women, she adopted one with some hopes of success, and determined to put it into execution next day. Miss Rivers passed a sleepless night, and in the morning had the appearance of an alarming fever: her mother sent for a neighbouring apothecary, and having dressed herself, without acquainting her unhappy daughter of the design she had in view, sallied forth to Stanhope-street. Lady Beaumont was at Breakfast when Mrs. Rivers arrived, and though greatly surprised at such an early visit, gave instant orders for her admittance; Sir William was still in bed, and therefore

therefore did not hear of her coming. Mrs. Rivers entered Lady Beaumont's dressing-room with an air of grief and despair; the servant having withdrawn, she threw herself into her chair, and burst into tears: Lady Beaumont, surprised and affected, rose immediately to console her, with the most tender politeness. "Oh! Lady Beaumont, (cried she,) you behold the most miserable of women. I am undone; my dear fatherless child is ruined for ever, and your son the cruel cause."—"My son! (exclaimed Lady Beaumont) good Heavens, madam, what do you mean?" Mrs. Rivers, then, amidst tears and sighs, related the whole affair, but glossed it over in such an artful manner as to take all blame from herself and throw the whole on Sir William.—A gentleman of rank and fashion, (continued she,) has, for some time, been partial to Anna, and I have treated her severely for refusing him, 'tis plain her partiality to Sir William, and her reliance on his honour was the cause; and now how cruelly has he requited that preference! O Lady Beaumont, an amiable virtuous young woman, my only comfort and hope in life is seduced, drawn from the paths of virtue, and soon, too soon, will leave me childless and miserable! for death is her only wish! 'Tis impossible to convey an idea of Lady Beaumont's grief and astonishment at such an unexpected detail of the misconduct of her son: (*the very short time he had been in Town to be guilty of such enormities*) gave her the most sensible affliction:—she paused, hesitated, and was wholly at a loss for a reply:—Mrs. Rivers wept abundantly—Lady Beaumont felt the sincerest compassion for her situation, and at last, taking her hand, "'tis needless I believe, my dear

dear madam, (said she) for me to express the horror and concern I feel on this occasion; would to Heaven I had it in my power to remove your sorrow! but I am totally at a loss how to act; I will see and talk to my son, and enter warmly into the cause of your amiable unfortunate daughter; yet as he is independent of me, and his own master, if justice, honor and compassion have no weight with him, I fear my influence is not to be depended on"—“Ah, madam! (cried Mrs. Rivers,) I feel your goodness, and you, I am sure, must pity a parent's distress.—To have but one child, (but one hold on earth to engage my affections,) and to have that one rendered miserable for life through an unhappy attachment and a momentary weakness, alas, this last evil is more severe than all the woes I have lately felt, for now my only hope of comfort is torn from me!

—“Dear madam, (answered Lady Beaumont,) let me beseech you to be composed; return to your disconsolate daughter, endeavour to sooth her to peace, and depend upon seeing me in the evening. If I can prevail with my son, be assured I shall acknowledge Miss Rivers as my daughter.—Delighted by this assurance the aim of all her wishes, this artful woman took leave with all the appearance of heavy grief, and deep-felt gratitude to Lady Beaumont.

After Mrs. Rivers had left her, Lady Beaumont fell into a train of the most painful reflections; though she most severely condemned her son, yet, she could not think the young lady quite blameless: their acquaintance had been so short as to have precluded any strong attachment, or any great degree of intimacy: she could not find much satisfaction in the idea

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of her son's marrying Miss Rivers, as she concluded there must have been some improper levities in her behaviour; but, when she considered the situation of the mother and daughter, and the afflictions and misfortunes they had encountered by the death of Mr. Rivers and the loss of a splendid income, she felt her compassion so strongly engaged as to overweigh every other consideration:—she rang the bell and enquired if Sir William was stirring, and being answered in the affirmative sent to let him know she wished to speak to him before he went out. He was then engaged in writing to Miss Rivers, and being guided by the Colonel's advice, actually made her an offer of taking her a genteel house and settling on her 400 l. a year for life:—having dispatched a very tender epistle, and requested leave to wait on her in the evening, he repaired to his mother's apartment, and was not a little struck at observing a solemnity on her features not common, and the traces of tears in her eyes.—Having fastened the door, after some hesitation, she addressed him: “I am much grieved, Sir William, to be compelled to accuse you of the most cruel and dishonourable actions, of destroying the peace of a worthy parent and rendering an amiable young woman miserable for ever.” Sir William started, turned pale and trembled with surprise and vexation—“I see, (added she) that when I have informed you Mrs. Rivers has been with me, I need not be more explicit; O, my son, how swiftly have you followed error and plunged into vice! what reparation can you offer an unhappy young woman, born to high prospects, by severe afflictions deprived of affluence,

ence, and now thrown by a moment's criminal indulgence beyond the lowest of her sex! The dispensations of Providence, however afflictive, may be rendered supportable where there is no self-reproach to embitter reflection: but how is the unhappy Miss Rivers to bear retrospection? and by what fallacious arguments can you reconcile to yourself the irreparable injuries done to a family sufficiently unhappy before you added shame and remorse to their misfortunes?" "Unable to frame any kind of reply, Sir William sat motionless, oppressed with a thousand different sensations, sometimes he was inclined from pity to tell his mother, he was ready to marry Miss Rivers, but then the character he had heard both of the mother and daughter, and the indiscreet conduct, to call it no worse, of the latter, the ridicule he should incur from Minors, and the being so early confined by a matrimonial engagement, more than over-balanced his compassion for Miss Rivers, and his compunction for his fault. —After a variety of contending emotions, the result of which Lady Beaumont silently awaited; "I hope, madam, (said he,) you will believe I had no particular design of seducing Miss Rivers, and that I most sincerely lament our late unhappy error; I was fond of her 'tis true, but the advances both of mother and daughter met me at least half-way, and last night we were thrown together purposely I have no doubt"—"How, William! interrupted her ladyship, are you mean and wicked enough to endeavour at lessening your own crimes by ascribing to imprudence and design the civilities you received from unsuspecting innocence?"

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fie, fie ! this is really in my eyes an aggravation of your guilt." "Hear me with patience, madam, and then judge with candour."—He now repeated, without naming his author, the intelligence he had heard from Minors; he mentioned the frequent opportunities given him by the mother, and the very apparent design of the daughter to draw him in; and though he confessed she seemed bitterly to repent the fatal indulgence she had given him, he was inclined to think even that proceeded more from momentary remorse than from real virtue.—“Impossible ! (cried Lady Beaumont) ’tis impossible they can be such as you represent them: you are deceived and imposed on by some profligate, who wished to render you equally wicked with himself.—My heart bleeds for them, your honor, your humanity is concerned in making reparation; there is but one way, and that is to marry Miss Rivers !”—“Marry her ! (repeated the Baronet,) would your ladyship wish me to marry a girl without friends and fortune, and who has been so imprudent ?” “Yes, (answered she warmly,) those very deficiencies are her recommendations; had a young woman of fortune fallen into such a criminal indulgence I should have despised her; but this poor unfortunate girl has no resource against shame and the contempt of the world; and although her fault is not lessened by her poverty, yet her claims upon your humanity are the stronger, for you have ruined her peace of mind for ever; you have brought self-reproach on the unfortunate, and you now give her up to calumny and disgrace. Yesterday I would have objected to your union with Miss Rivers, to day I urge, I entreat you to marry her; she has a claim

claim to justice, and there is no other way to render it—you say you are fond of her, make yourself then truly amiable in her eyes; have a claim to her affection and gratitude for life, by making her your's for ever.”—Thus earnestly pressed, Sir William was at a loss how to act, he had no inclination to marry, still less to unite himself with Miss Rivers; after pausing some time, he begged four and twenty hours to consider of it,—this delay did not please Lady Beaumont, she thought reflection and the advice of his companions would over-turn all her arguments; yet, when she considered that her compassion for Miss Rivers ought not to make her forgetful of her son's happiness, and that to *force* a wife upon him might imbitter all his future days, she knew not what to say; —he had a right to free agency, and if some little affection did not plead for the poor girl as well as her persuasions, the marriage might prove a curse to both. Under this conviction, she replied; “undoubtedly take time to consider; and may the result, whatever it is, be equally advantageous to your honor and your happiness!—I shall, nevertheless, go to Green-street and offer what consolation is in my power to both mother and daughter.—“Do not (cried Sir William,) make any promises, or inspire hopes which may prove delusive.”—“You may be sure I will not, answered she.” They then separated; Sir William retired to dress, and when dressed flew away in search of his friend and counsellor, to supply him with the money he had promised, and to pay his own debts of the preceding evening. He found the Colonel at the Coffee-house, and after they had settled the business of the money, much to his satisfaction, Sir William proceeded to in-
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form him of the letter he had sent to Miss Rivers, of the mother's visit to Lady Beaumont, and of the conversation between his mother and himself. What the devil, (cried Minors,) is your mother so romantic, that because the girl has neither fortune or virtue, you must supply the one and patch up the other? Pretty doctrine indeed! but I hope, my friend, you have more sense than to be the dupe of Mrs. Rivers's schemes and artifice"—“Certainly I will not, but really I am at loss what to do”—“do!” (cried the Colonel,) do any thing but marry; a pretty thing indeed to marry such a girl, and pay the price of matrimony to introduce her into life for the use of your friends.”—“Nay, Colonel, (answered Sir William,) I believe you injure the poor girl, I really do not think her vicious.” No; certainly, (said Minors,) nothing but *the attractions of Sir William Beaumont could have lulled her virtue to sleep*: however, to be serious, I am pretty well acquainted with the world and no stranger to the artifices and inclinations of the female part of it, and whenever I see a girl brought up in a style of dress and fashion she has no fortune to support; whenever I see an imprudent mother exhibiting her daughter at every public place, and encouraging young fellows to buzz about her without any proper restrictions; depend upon it the girl is a coquet, a jilt, or any thing a young man of fortune may chuse to make of her, and the mother little better than a procuress, who is on the watch to make the best bargain she can for her daughter:”—“But, (said Sir William,) there is nothing reprehensible in a parent's wishes and endeavours to provide for a child.”—“No, (answered Minors) not where those wishes and endeavours

are confined within the limits of decorum ; but I leave you to judge if such was the conduct of Mrs. Rivers—would a prudent mother have brought her daughter again into the gay world to make her languish for pleasures out of her power to purchase ? would a prudent mother invite the company of young gay men, and leave them *rête à rête* with her child at all hours ? No, no, Beaumont, they may endeavour to impose upon you, as one ignorant of the world and its customs, but they could not dupe me.”

—“ Neither shall they impose on me, (replied Sir William,) I like Miss Rivers very well as a companion, and if she accepts my offers shall find much pleasure in contributing to her ease and happiness ; but as to marrying her, I am determined against it.”—“ And then, (said the Colonel in a whining tone,) then will mamma scold, then will Miss cry, then will Lady Beaumont lecture, and have you courage to stand such attacks ?” “ Yes, you will find I have spirit enough to stand my ground, and not sacrifice my happiness to compulsion or persuasion.”—“ Well, then, you have more resolution than I expected ;—let us see you in the evening, for I long to know the event of your letter and Lady Beaumont’s visit.”—They separated, Sir William took two or three turns in the Mall to reflect on the important business before him, previous to meeting his mother, whom he half dreaded to see.——

Her ladyship, soon after he went out, ordered her carriage, and drove to Mrs. Rivers’s ; that lady saw her alight with much pleasure and high expectation ; Lady Beaumont enquired very tenderly after Miss Rivers ; the mother said she had been let blood, and appeared rather more

composed; "I will tell her you are here," (added she.) "Not unless you think my presence may afford her any comfort, (said Lady Beaumont;) and I wish, dear madam, to let you know my *hopes* are very slender, though my wishes are strong." She then repeated such parts of the conversation, between herself and Sir William, as could not offend Mrs. Rivers's delicacy, and concluded with saying, "You see, that having no power to compel my son, if I fail in persuasion, all hopes are at an end; and should that unhappily be the case, I must insist that you permit me to settle such a sum on Miss Rivers as she might have expected for pin-money had she been my son's wife; her delicacy, I dare say, will never permit her to marry, and therefore 'tis my duty to provide for her in such a manner as may guard her from all pecuniary difficulties in living single." Mrs. Rivers was about to acknowledge Lady Beaumont's kindness when Sir William's letter was brought; both the ladies was surprised, and Mrs. Rivers proposed opening it: This her ladyship declined, and begged it might be conveyed to the young lady; adding, "Sincerely do I wish the contents may be such as to afford her comfort and pleasure." The letter being sent up, before they had time to renew their conversation, the bell was rang with great violence, and Mrs. Rivers, running up stairs, almost instantly cried out, "Oh, Lady Beaumont, my child is dying!" Lady Beaumont, extremely alarmed, followed her, and, on entering the room, saw the unhappy girl had fainted away; she drew near the bed, and applied her salts, whilst Mrs. Rivers was busily employed in reading the letter which lay open, and appeared to be the cause of this sudden

den alarm. Mrs. Rivers put the letter in her pocket, and having mixed some hartshorn and water, tried to force it down the throat of her daughter, who began to shew some signs of life: At length, opening her eyes, with a deep sigh, she fixed them on Lady Beaumont, faintly screamed, and hid her head in the pillow. The servant being dismissed, Lady Beaumont took her hand, and tenderly pressing it, "Be composed, my dear young lady, (said she;) here are none but friends about you; I promise to be your firm unalterable friend; look up then with comfort, and let all disagreeable events be blotted from your remembrance like the visions of the night." Miss Rivers raised her head, and looking with great earnestness, answered, "I thank you, madam, for your unmerited kindness; but there is no comfort for me!" "You know not that, (said her ladyship;) endeavour to be reconciled to yourself, and all will be well." A deep sigh was Miss Rivers's only answer; and as she appeared restless and uneasy, Lady Beaumont took leave, repeatedly assuring her of her affection, and promising to see her again next day. Mrs. Rivers called in the servant, and then following Lady Beaumont, "You see, madam, (said she) to what a miserable condition your son has reduced my child; he ought, if he is a man of honor, to redress her wrongs." "I do see, madam, I see with much compassion, Miss Rivers's situation; and did it depend on me, I have already told you my sentiments; but young men, at his time of life, are seldom talked into measures of this kind without the concurrence of inclination, which I most sincerely wish may operate in favor of your daughter; every thing that depends on myself for your ease and comfort you may be

assured of. Lady Beaumont took leave, and returned to meet her son at dinner; she acquainted him with her visit, and how ill she had left Miss Rivers. "There is one circumstance (continued she) that I wish to have explained; a letter from you came whilst I was there, and to that letter, it is pretty evident, was owing the fit Miss Rivers was seized with; the contents were not communicated to me, and I own myself curious to know what they were." Sir William was all confusion; he cursed the careless remissness of his servant in delaying the delivery of the letter, and was never more at a loss for a reply. "I see (said his mother) I am not to be let into the secret; yet I should imagine, after what I already know, there can be no reason for concealment."—"Indeed (replied Sir William at last) there is nothing to conceal; I wrote a few lines to express my sorrow and regret, and entreated her to make herself easy, as I should be always glad to promote her happiness. Something like that I know it was."—"Well, (replied her ladyship 'tis not of much consequence what its contents were; I have engaged to call on Mrs. Rivers to-morrow, as you have promised to determine within that time, I sincerely hope I may be the messenger of good news."—" 'Tis needless, madam, (said he) to keep you in suspense when I have made up my own mind; I most truly regret the folly I have been guilty of, and will do any thing you may think proper to restore Miss Rivers's peace; but—I cannot marry her"—"And is this resolution of your's the result of serious deliberation?"—"It is, madam, I cannot think of marriage as yet; I am young, have seen nothing of the world, particularly the female part of it; and, I think,

I think, to unite myself to Miss Rivers without a decided preference in her favor, would be doing an equal injury to both." "And pray, (said her ladyship) did you never lead this poor girl to believe you did prefer her to others?"—"I do not think I did absolutely; I have admired her person, and warmly declared my admiration, but indeed, madam, my little attentions were so very favorably received, 'twas unnecessary to make protestations or promises; in a word, I am well persuaded it was a premeditated design of Mrs. Rivers's and her daughter's to draw me into marriage; the young lady not being quite so artful as her mother, in an unlucky moment, fell a sacrifice; if she is miserable, I am truly sorry; but matrimony must be out of the question."—"I know not (said Lady Beaumont, very gravely,) from whom you have obtained your new lights and free sentiments, but I must tell you plainly, the ruin of an innocent young woman is a crime of the deepest dye, and calls for repentance and amendment too;—however you may reconcile it to yourself, I know you have made me extremely miserable; for only a corrupted heart can be callous to such distress as you have occasioned. Oh, William! so early initiated into vice, and so ready to adopt unjust prejudices! Alas! that any heart can be so devoid of feeling as to add unkindness and reproach to the anguish of a broken spirit and an afflicted heart! What a task have you imposed on me! And how shall I meet this unhappy girl to-morrow?" "I am really sorry for what has happened, but, my dear mother, you give yourself unnecessary pain; Mrs. Rivers is not the woman you take her to be; and for the daughter, with her pretty person, and the mother's

ther's management, she may still get well married." So saying, he hastily left the room. Lady Beaumont saw, with much sorrow, the libertine principles instilled into his mind, and bitterly regretted his want of knowledge respecting men and manners. "Alas ! (said she) from an anxiety to preserve his morals uncorrupted by a public education, I have kept him in one narrow circle ; and now, being at once plunged into high life, and unluckily fallen into a dissipated profligate acquaintance, how soon are his morals depraved ! And in all probability he will follow his libertine pursuits with ten thousand times more avidity than if he had earlier been inducted into the knowledge of the world. This vile destructive town ! Would to Heaven we had never seen, or always resided in it !" Sir William in the mean time was not free from anxiety ; his passion for Miss Rivers was not very violent, yet he did not like the idea of losing her :—No answer had been returned to his letter ; his mother judged her fits had been occasioned by perusing it, and should the contents be communicated to Lady Beaumont, he was conscious she would have just cause to be exasperated against him : He had not the resolution to present himself at Mrs. Rivers's door, but repaired to his companions under much disquietude, and with a very serious countenance. There were three tables engaged when he entered the room, and Lord Stormer was walking about apparently much agitated. The parties nodded to the Baronet, and the Colonel told him he should presently cut in ; a matter he was totally indifferent about ; but advancing to Lord Stormer, he enquired if his lordship had done play.—" Would to Heaven (replied he, with eagerness)

eagerness) I had never played at all!—O, Sir William, I am undone—I have lost an immense sum, and where the devil to raise a guinea I know not! Those two strangers you see at yonder table have completely fleeced me; the Colonel thought them novices, but they are a match for him with all his finesse.” This last observation startled Sir William, but before he had time for observation, two of the tables broke up; the Colonel declared himself a winner of about 300 pounds, and in high spirits, challenged the Baronet to take him up; he was never less inclined to play, yet to avoid reflections, at that time, not very pleasant, he consented, and asked Lord Stormer to join the table. “I would do so with all my heart, (replied he) but I have lost every shilling; therefore must play on credit if I play at all.” If twenty guineas will be of any use, (said Sir William) they are at your service: ’Tis a moiety of what I have in my purse, and as much as I shall play for this evening.”—“I accept your friendly offer (said his lordship;) and am much obliged to you. The Colonel here would not lend me a sixpence.”—“Not I, faith”, (replied Minors.) They sat down to play; Sir William and Lord Stormer against the Colonel and Mr. Bangor, one of the strangers. Fortune still sat her face against the two former; their ready money soon changed sides; and his lordship being desperate, and Sir William careless and inattentive to his losses, from the agitation of his mind, they began to play on credit, doubling the stakes every time, till their opponents thought it convenient to assume the mask of forbearance, and told the losers, that as ill luck pursued them still, they had better take their
revenge

revenge next day: The unsuccessful gentlemen, pretty well tired, and out of spirits, agreed to the proposal; but what was their surprise to find the amount of their losses was near a thousand pounds each! To regret or complain availed nothing; they therefore gave notes for the money, and after agreeing to meet at the play the following evening, and from thence adjourn to their engagement, they separated. Lord Stormer retired, overwhelmed with vexation, Sir William to brood over his accumulated misfortunes; he had now lost every shilling of the two thousand pounds he had taken up, and was nearly four hundred in debt: What was to be done? There was no remedy; he must apply to his city friend, who before accommodated him, and take up another thousand. Fatigued and uneasy, he went to bed, but sleep forsook him; reflection in the forms of Miss Rivers, and the gaming-table, precluded all repose; and in the morning he found himself unrefreshed, and with a violent head-ach.

CHAP. X.

HEROIC RESOLUTION.

IN the morning, soon after breakfast, Lady Beaumont prepared to call on Mrs. Rivers under the most painful difficulties in what manner to unfold her son's resolutions. On alighting from her carriage, she was informed Miss Rivers was much better; Mrs. Rivers received her in the drawing-room, with a countenance on which expectation, hope, and fear, were very visible. After expressing her satisfaction that Miss Rivers was more composed, Lady Beaumont addressed Mrs. Rivers with some emotion:—"I am sorry, my dear madam, that I cannot felicitate myself on being the messenger of good news; all my arguments have failed to bring my son to a resolution of marriage; he does justice to Miss Rivers's merit, and sincerely laments a misfortune which he declares was owing more to accident and circumstances than to any premeditated design on his part, or weakness on her's. What shall I say, dear madam, to alleviate your distress of mind? I know there can be no compensation offered for what is invaluable; and, from my

son, I know you would disdain to receive a favor. Fortune, I know, has not dealt justly with you: Will you honor me so far as to accept from me £400 for your life and your amiable daughter's? 'Tis the only means to make me happy, and reconcile me to my ill-advised son?" Mrs. Rivers had been violently agitated during this address; at the conclusion she arose, and, opening a cabinet, took the letter which Sir William had sent the preceding day, and delivering it, "Before I make any reply to your ladyship's kindness, (said she) I wish you to peruse that letter." 'Tis hardly possible to form any idea of Lady Beaumont's surprise when she read her son's profligate proposal, and found how much he had deceived her. "'Tis needless, madam, I hope, for me, to express my detestation of this infamous scroll; I blush at my son's unworthiness; but let me beseech you to forget that I am his mother, and deign to accept my offer." Mrs. Rivers, well convinced her favorite scheme of marriage must be given up, cast about in her mind what would be next best; the income Lady Beaumont offered was a genteel addition, and would enable her to make a figure abroad, where her daughter might, she thought, still marry advantageously: She, therefore, after many expressions of gratitude, acceded to her ladyship's request, and invited her upstairs to see her daughter: They found Miss Rivers had just risen, and with infinite concern Lady Beaumont saw the ravages so short a period had made in her form—the young lady burst into tears on their entrance; her ladyship could not command her's from flowing; and taking her hand, "My dear Miss Rivers, (said she) let us have no disagreeable retrospections;

retrospections ; consider me as a friend devoted to your service." Mrs. Rivers then very abruptly acquainted her daughter with Lady Beaumont's kindness, which, of itself explained Sir William's sentiments ; she paused a little, and then turning to her mother, asked whether she might be left for a few minutes alone with Lady Beaumont ?—"Certainly, child," (said Mrs. Rivers, rising ;) but added in a low voice, "It will be of no effect." No sooner had Mrs. Rivers quitted the room, than the poor girl threw herself at Lady Beaumont's feet, in spite of her efforts to prevent her.—"Do not, madam, attempt to raise me ; let me, in this posture, confess my folly, my great unworthiness, and that my punishment is but adequate to my crime. The last twenty-four hours have brought me to a sense of my guilt."—"I cannot hear you, my dear Miss Rivers, in that posture ; rise, I entreat you ; and do not repeat any circumstances which must occasion equal pain to me and to yourself."—"I will rise, madam, (answered she) since you request it ; but you must hear what I have to say.—I was brought up in affluence and indolence, and taught a few superficial accomplishments, only such as are usually acquired at fashionable boarding-schools ;—the loss of my father, and a splendid income, threw my mother into great difficulties ; at my request, we retired into the country, where her whole time was employed in building castles, and forming schemes to regain her former grandeur. Had she been reconciled to her fate, in all probability I should have been so to mine ; but continual regrets on her part made me discontented likewise : She endeavoured to engage the attention of several
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of the neighbouring opulent gentlemen; but a young woman brought up in the highest stile, without a fortune, could be no desirable connexion for them.—A little matter of business gave us a pretence to visit town, and again my mother flattered herself some of my former admirers might renew their addresses. Alas! those admirers were the butterflies of a day; they basked in the sunshine, but, when night came, they forsook their once favorite haunts to seek for entertainment in a brighter sky. I was no longer the charming, the opulent Miss Rivers; poverty had robbed me of my attractions, and my former affluence was considered as a reproach. My mother seeing all attempts to renew our pretensions to fashion and gay acquaintance met with the most mortifying repulse, resolved to quit London. The day previous to our intended departure, we called on Lady Stanley, who was just come to town; there we had the honor, (a fatal one to me!) of meeting your ladyship and Sir William. My mother, ever on the watch, instantly foresaw the advantages which might arise from our cultivating an intimacy with you and your son. Our journey was postponed; I was directed to throw myself in his way, and, if possible, engage his affections:—To my shame, I confess, I too readily obeyed these orders. At first Sir William was totally indifferent to me—he was frequently invited; I spared no pains to attract his attentions; my mother used frequently to leave us: I began to find my own affections insensibly engaged, and sometimes blushed at the duplicity I practised. He grew very fond of me; my mother charged me to bring him to a declaration to accept his
offers,

offers, and hurry matters to a conclusion without your knowledge. One fatal evening I was left to entertain him, with all proper instructions to render that evening decisive; and decisive it was (added she, bursting into tears,) of my future misery for ever."—"Say not so, my amiable girl; your sincerity and candour must atone, in the eyes of judgment and rectitude, for all your errors."—"You are too good to me, madam, (answered she,) but I will proceed: Sir William seemed uncommonly fond of me; his warm expressions of tenderness and admiration sunk into my heart, and lulled my prudence asleep.—A! let no modest young woman ever indulge herself with such dangerous *tête-à-têtes*!—Let her be warned, from me, to distrust herself, nor suffer the least freedom, nor the smallest deviation from prudence and delicacy!—Justly says the poet:

"He comes too near, that comes to be denied."

What can I say, madam? without one vicious thought or inclination, in an evil moment I was undone. A miserable victim to all my blasted schemes, adupe to my own duplicity, and without a single claim on the honor, or affection of the man who was my ruin; I could not upbraid him—I left him in despair; and when my mother came home in high expectation that her visions of returning grandeur would soon be realized, I acquainted her with my irretrievable misfortune; her affliction may be easily guessed, but I beseech you, madam, to believe I was totally unacquainted with her design of waiting on you: to complain to you was what I never should have consented to:—when she returned, in hopes that Sir William would

would be brought to do me justice, as she called it, I suppressed my resolution to avoid giving her pain; but reflection had brought me to a sense of my misconduct; I knew myself deservedly punished, and had Sir William spared me the insolent proposal you are, no doubt, acquainted with, I never should have reflected on him; he has now convinced me how much I am sunk in his opinion, and that he never esteemed me—to him I never *will* owe an obligation; and, forgive me, madam, if I say, from his mother I *dare* not—I know my own unworthiness, and never shall it be said I received a compensation for lost virtue, or could find in affluence a remedy against the stings of conscience.—No, I will retire into the country with a new heart and an enlightened mind; poverty has no longer any terrors for me; I shall in retirement learn to repent of my past ill conduct, and endeavour, by industry, to procure those little indulgencies for my mother which our scanty income has hitherto denied her;—my little abilities shall be improved, and I hope henceforth to employ my time usefully to myself and others; I have blasted all my mother's hopes, and although I acknowledge my errors originate from her, yet 'twas her warm affection for me, perhaps, that gave birth to them:—My study, therefore, must be to reconcile her to herself and me:—and now, madam, having confessed my unworthiness, let me hope for your pardon and pity.”—“Not only my pity, my dear Miss Rivers, you are entitled to my admiration.—What a noble mind, my dear girl, has been perverted by the errors of education! I applaud your resolution of returning into the country; but beware of giving

ing yourself up to solitude ; your errors are not the faults of your heart ; a combination of unlucky circumstances and bad advice, which, though perhaps well intended, was extremely dangerous, has been the cause of your present distress ; that my son should have so principal a share in augmenting it, will give me everlasting regret ;—if indeed you are pleased with my attentions, if you would wish to alleviate my regret, and enable me to bear the presence of my son—you must consider me as your second mother, you must permit Mrs. Rivers to accept my offers :) on these terms I will venture to solicit your friendship, your correspondence deny me not, my dear Miss Rivers, the happiness of alleviating your sorrows, and giving peace to my own bosom.” “ Oh, madam, (said Miss Rivers, kissing her hand,) what a heart is yours ! O, that I had been blessed with such a mother !—What a different being might I have then proved !”—“ Alas, my dear girl, (resumed Lady Beaumont), many parents mistake in the education of youth ; and I know, by experience, how apt we all are to be deceived respecting the propriety of the mode we determine to pursue.—I never, by precept or example, encouraged vice or checked virtue ; yet, to my mistaken mode of education, I attribute all the errors of my son.—But no more of unpleasant subjects.—Let me hope you accede to my wishes.—Consult with your mother, as to the situation that will best please you both ; and allow me the delight of assisting in rendering you happy.” Miss Rivers, overcome by a generosity and kindness so unexpected and so undeserved, could only evince by her tears the sensibility of her heart.—Lady Beaumont went down

down to the drawing-room, and having again assured Mrs. Rivers of the annuity, and advised her to consult her daughter relative to their future residence, she quitted the house, filled with pity and compassion for the daughter, and the highest contempt for the mother, to whom she thought the errors of Miss Rivers were much more imputable than to a faulty heart.

Mrs. Rivers returned to her daughter and learned she was irresistably overcome to accept Lady Beaumont's kind offer.—“For my part, (said the mother,) I should like to go to France; they are a delightful gay people, our income will enable us to appear there to advantage.”—“I would much rather, if you liked it, madam, retire to some village in the interior part of England.”—“Not I, indeed, (retorted Mrs. Rivers) there is no reason *I* should decline company or amusements: if you don't chuse to mix with the world you must live retired; but I certainly will not bury myself alive in a country-village when my income will enable me to live in the capital.”—“Far be it from me, madam, to wish you should live in any place not perfectly agreeable to your inclinations: permit me therefore to make a proposal; allow me *one* hundred a year to live upon in any situation *I* like; and if, at the expiration of one twelvemonth, you require me to join you wherever you *are*, I will instantly obey your orders.”—“You are a very strange girl, (answered the mother,) you have blighted *all* my hopes, brought infamy into my family, and now, when probably an opportunity may offer abroad to connect yourself reputably, you fly to solitude, and prevent all possibility of retrieving your errors.”—“Those errors, madam, (an-

swered Miss Rivers weeping,) *cannot* be retrieved: I feel for *your* disappointment, and am justly punished for the duplicity of my own conduct: let me beseech you, madam, to grant my request; let me find some peaceful abode in the country: do you pursue the delights of the town, and forget your unworthy daughter.”—“Well Miss, if you are obstinate, (said Mrs. Rivers,) I consent to your wishes; I suppose we shall see Lady Beaumont to-morrow and have the annuity settled, and then I shall immediately set off for France.”—Saying this, she flounced out of the room, and retired to enjoy, by anticipation, those delights she expected from so considerable an addition to her income, forgetful that to the ruin of an unfortunate daughter, (in all probability ruined by her pernicious advice,) she owed *that* addition which was to constitute her future happiness. Miss Rivers, when left alone, wrote the following letter to Lady Beaumont.

“Vain is the attempt, dearest madam, to find expressions capable of describing the feelings of my heart—a heart now conscious of all its errors, and truly sensible of your unexampled goodness.—Henceforth you must direct every action of my life:—deign then, madam, to favor me with your advice in my present situation.—I wish to retire far, very far from London; my mother intends residing in France, but that gay nation has no charms for me; some decent rural place in the interior part of England is my choice; but I am equally a stranger to all counties, and to offer myself as a boarder in any reputable house, without recommendation would be a presumptuous and vain attempt. Will you,

you, madam, have the goodness to point out some retreat, and venture to answer for the conduct of one who has proved herself so unworthy? 'Tis only to Lady Beaumont I dare apply—and she, of all women in the world, ought to despise me—what a fate is mine!—deserving of hatred and contempt from the very person I most honor and revere!—but believe me, madam;—venture to confide in me, and I will endeavour, by the regularity of my future life, to atone for my past misconduct. Condescend to be my adviser, my guide and comforter, for the rest of my days.”

ANNA RIVERS.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

REFLECTION, HOW BITTER.

SIR William arose a prey to the most uneasy reflections; he reviewed the past week; the retrospection was shocking; he had ruined an unfortunate young woman; he had lost a large sum, and was involved in debts of honor, which must be paid: he had deceived a worthy, and affectionate mother, and brought trouble and sorrow on a parent who depended on him for the happiness of her life; and what were the advantages to himself? Sorrow, shame, and remorse! He recalled the transactions of the past evening; there was something equivocal in the Colonel's behaviour; he refused to accommodate his friend, Lord Stormer, with a trifling sum, though he gladly partook of the twenty pieces Sir William lent him; he had involved them both in considerable debts, without ever offering to discharge the obligation he owed him the preceding evening; he began to think the Colonel was not altogether the man of honour
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he wished to find him.—Doubts and irresolution assailed his mind; one moment he resolved to drop the Colonel's acquaintance, the next, he considered him as a fashionable man, with extensive connections, and as one who might be very useful in teaching him to read mankind:—It was only, he thought, making a firm resolution to avoid playing for any considerable sums, and then no inconveniences could arise from the friendship. As to Miss Rivers, should she refuse his offer, his heart was not so very firmly fixed on her as to make him miserable; and his mother, if he acknowledged sorrow for his past errors, (knowing she had no authority over him,) might soon be reconciled: He had a very fine clear estate, the money in the funds therefore might be appropriated to procure him pleasure and a knowledge of the world. After many conflicts, he at last made up his mind to be satisfied with himself for the present, and to be more on his guard for the future: He longed for the dinner hour, in order to meet with his mother; for, tho' conscious of deserving her displeasure, he wished to know the result of her visit to Miss Rivers, as on that report he must ground his future hopes, or be contented to resign them. At the usual hour they met at table; Sir William, with a pale, haggard countenance, Lady Beaumont with looks of mingled sorrow and displeasure: After a very dull dinner, when the servants were withdrawn, her ladyship, in a very grave tone, said, "I have spent this morning with the unhappy Miss Rivers; you need not fear any more solicitations from me, for she too much despises you now to accept your hand after the insulting insolent letter you dared to send her. What an aggravation of
your

your crime to presume she would accept an offer so base and profligate ! She bids me tell you, Sir, that she renounces you for ever ; that she has no claim on you, and that the only atonement you can now make is never to mention her name more, or attempt to see or hear of her : She is going into the country, a prey to sorrow and remorse ; you have embittered her future life, and will one day feel self-reproach and deep regret for the evils your profligateness has heaped on this poor unfortunate girl." " I do feel reproach at this instant, madam ; I regret the folly which has brought this sorrow on her and you : But since I cannot recall what is past, if she really is desirous of going into the country, I beg you will appropriate what part of my income you please to her use." " No, Sir, she prefers indigence to any obligations to you ; her plan is fixed, and she rejects all assistance from the man who could suppose her fallen so low as to accept a price for her ruin. Endeavour to make atonement by devoting the sum you offered to her, to the relief of the virtuous, the poor, and unfortunate ; seek out objects for your benevolence, and may their blessings throw a veil over your past irregularities !" She then left him, covered with surprise and confusion. Was this the Miss Rivers, who, as the Colonel said, only wanted a settlement ? She now rejected all his offers, despised him, and was going to bury herself in the country ; his faith in the Colonel was again staggered ; if he had mistaken her character, he had indeed irreparably injured her ; but then the mother had proved herself infamous ; perhaps the whole was a deception, practised on Lady Beaumont to engage her interest ; yet, upon examination
of

of his heart, he found he could support the loss of Miss Rivers without any violent affliction, and therefore 'twas best not to enquire too deeply into the truth or falsehood of Minors's assertions.

Having reconciled his mind to the conclusion of his intimacy with Miss Rivers, he next prepared to meet his convenient friend in the city, who very readily accommodated him with two thousand pounds more, on his bond, at an exorbitant interest, till he chose to sell out or make a transfer in the bank: The possession of the money exhilarated his spirits; he repaired with eager haste to meet his friends at the play-house, found a world of amusement in the representation of "The Suspicious Husband," and "The Deuce is in Him;" and, when the curtain dropped, he accompanied his friends to their old rendezvous. Before they seated themselves, Sir William desired to take up his note of the preceding evening, and receiving some compliments on the quick discharge of his honourable debts, prepared to take out his pocket-book where the chief part of the two thousand was deposited in bank-notes; judge of his horror and surprise when he found his book was gone! "By H——n! (cried he) I have lost my pocket-book and two thousand pounds!"—"Two thousand pounds! (repeated two or three persons in a breath;) the devil you have! Who would have carried two thousand pound in their pocket to the play-house?"—"Come, come, Beaumont, (said the Colonel) don't attempt to put a trick upon us; it won't pass; rather say, you left your money at home, or safe with your banker."—"I tell you, Sir, (answered the Baronet with much asperity in his

his manner,) I have lost my book with the sum I mentioned in it, except fifty pounds in my purse; (putting his hand into his other pocket, and taking it out) this, Sir, is all that remains."

"A devilish good find; (cries one of them) I wish I was the lucky fellow." Sir William mean

time walked about the room in great agitation.

"And had you really that sum in your possession this evening, Beaumont?"—(said the Colonel.)

"Sir, I have already told you I had: Dare you question my veracity?"—"Dare, Sir! (re-

torted the other;) dare you make use of the ex-

pression?" Lord Stormer and the others instantly interposed, and endeavoured to conciliate

matters between these two inseparable friends: And Mr. Bangor, the gentleman Sir Wil-

liam had played against the preceding evening, shaking him by the hand, said, "Come come,

don't be uneasy; the sum is a large one to be sure; you must advertise it in the morning; do

you recollect the numbers?"—"No, (answered the Baronet,) I know nothing about them;

but 'tis a very extraordinary circumstance that I should be robbed and not know it."

"O; not the least extraordinary, (said the Colonel) these things happen every day: The only wonder is

that you should carry so much property to the play-house; but, as in all probability the money

is gone to the devil, bless your stars that you are able to support the loss, and we will give

you your revenge upon honor."—At first Sir William declined play; but Lord Stormer said,

"Beaumont, here are the twenty pieces I borrowed of you; perhaps they may prove success-

ful; I have been obliged to take up money of the Israelites to-day at a cursed premium; and,

if I lose again to-night, shall be quite a bankrupt."

rupt.” With a distracted mind and disponding heart, Sir William sat down and won three rubbers at fifty guineas a rubber; this put him in spirits, and he went on doubling with eagerness in the hope of retrieving his former losses; but, alas! fortune had set her face against him; and, at breaking up, he was in debt upwards of four hundred pounds. Lord Stormer swore like a madman; Sir William was mute with vexation, till roused by being asked for an acknowledgment of the debt, he hastily gave his note, and appointing the gentlemen to meet him the next day at three, he left the house, overwhelmed with regret and sorrow: He must now be obliged to take up three thousand pounds more to pay his gaming debts; he was astonished at his own infatuation in playing after such repeated losses; he remembered his mother’s lessons, he saw how insensibly he was drawn on, and was convinced it was quite a gambling club: “What, then, should hinder me (thought he) from making a resolution to go thither no more?” ’Tis true, I shall forfeit some of my acquaintance; but I may find others perhaps equally agreeable; these have only led me into errors and the loss of a great deal of money.” In short, he formed, or rather imagined he had formed, a strict determination to play no more: The loss of his pocket-book vexed him greatly; he was certain he had it in his pocket when in the play-house, and having sat between the Colonel and another gentleman, could not have lost it there; under a thousand perplexing ideas, he retired to bed, and endeavoured in sleep to forget his cares.

CHAP. XII.

A MODERN PARENT.

LADY Beaumont was much affected with Miss Rivers's letter, and greatly enraged against the imprudent unfeeling mother; she sent for her attorney, and assigned over the promised four hundred pounds per year; but being disgusted with Mrs. Rivers, though she feared wounding the young lady's delicacy, yet she determined the income should be in her disposal, that Mrs. Rivers might not, by her extravagancies, distress her daughter. When this business was finished, Lady Beaumont hastened to Miss Rivers, and putting the deed into her hands, "You have kindly, my dear girl (said she) given up yourself to my direction; 'tis therefore my command that you accept this, as from your second mother; and as to the place of your retreat, I have two proposals to make: The clergyman of our parish and his wife are very worthy amiable people, and with them you would be happy; but perhaps my son

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may take it into his head, in the spring, to go down to Sion-Park, and therefore that scheme cannot be agreeable: But a worthy young woman of respectable friends, who was my own maid when I married, and for some years after, has been about ten years united to a very reputable tradesman at Exeter in Devonshire; he is a corn-factor, has acquired a good fortune, and they live genteely; I often hear from her; they have no children, and would, I am sure, rejoice at such an addition to their family: What do you think of becoming a boarder with her." "Dear madam, (answered Miss Rivers) 'tis the very thing I should wish for; a great distance from London, and with a worthy respectable family—O, if your ladyship will have the goodness to recommend me, 'tis the situation I should prefer to all others;—but pardon me, madam, if I cannot consent to accept of your bounty; perhaps you will think it a ridiculous piece of delicacy, but if you will have the goodness to accede to my proposal, it will make me very happy."—"Name it my dear Miss Rivers." "Then, madam, you must know two thousand pounds, my mother's fortune, were secured to her and her children; this sum will be very sufficient for my support; and if you will allow me to assign over this generous noble settlement to my mother, on condition that she gives me up the two thousand pounds, it will afford me the highest satisfaction, it will secure to my mother a handsome provision; it will enable me to live comfortably on what is my own property, without wounding my feelings. This, madam, is my proposal, and your ladyship's acquiescence will make me quite happy."—"Be happy then, my good Miss Rivers; it shall be as you wish; your delicacy

delicacy and filial affection deserve equal praise; my attorney shall attend you to-morrow and execute both deeds; there is no reason to fear your mother's refusal of what is so much for her advantage: And I will write to Mrs. Wilkins, this very evening relative to your removal." With the warmest expressions of esteem, Lady Beaumont left Miss Rivers, and returned but just time enough to dress for dinner.

This being the day on which Sir William had promised to accompany her to Lady Mandeville's rout, she expected him with some degree of impatience; but her dinner was nearly finished when he made his appearance: he apologized to her for making her wait, whilst she surveyed his person with much anxiety and silent sorrow: After two or three suppressed sighs she said; "You remember, Sir William, you are engaged to Lady Mandeville's this evening?" "Yes, madam, (he gravely replied,) I shall certainly meet you there; but, may I be permitted to ask what you have done for Miss Rivers?"—"No, (answered she,) ask nothing; you may, I think, be satisfied that I have done every thing in my power to secure her future happiness respecting pecuniary matters—time only can reconcile a delicate mind to irreparable evils accompanied by self-reproach:—yet, I venture to pronounce, Miss Rivers is naturally well-disposed; but from the errors of education and the want of a wise and good example she has been hurried into actions her better judgment condemns.—Let me beseech you, my son, to let this unhappy affair have a due effect on your mind; your heart is not a bad one, but, governed by your passions, and misled by the companions you have chosen, you have already injured an unfortunate young woman,

occasioned sorrow and bitter reflection to your mother, and must feel eternal remorse yourself, unless you are callous to every humane sentiment, which God forbid should be the case.

—But I will not oppress you farther; Miss Rivers is going into the country as happy as she can now be, and you need not henceforth doubt my attentions to her; but all assistance from you she utterly disclaims.”—“ Pardon me, madam, (said Sir William,) if it should appear as if I meant to exculpate myself; but I certainly have been misled as to her character; and, I must say, her behaviour was such as strengthened the opinion I entertained of her—her mother, I am convinced, is worthless, and to her imprudence in encouraging our frequent *tête à tête*s our late misfortune may be ascribed; for though I liked Miss Rivers, yet I never was sufficiently attached to think of marrying her, even had her character *not* been equivocal.”—

“ This is a painful subject, Sir William, and I wish to drop it; let the impression be strong on your *mind*, but do not renew it in conversation, for I feel already much more than I can express for the unfortunate daughter of a designing despicable mother.” They then separated, and Sir William retired to the library, overcome with painful reflections. Soon after breakfast he had been into the city to raise three thousand pounds more in order to discharge his debts; he mentioned to his agent in this business the loss of the preceding evening; the man told him he might advertise, though there was very little probability of recovering his property, but assured him, henceforth he would himself take the numbers of what bills he accommodated him with.—At three o'clock he went

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to his *friends* to settle his debts of *honour* as they are called;—prostituted word!—when, in general, those debts are incurred by every species of mean deceit, fraud and artifice, to which the ignorant and unwary fall a sacrifice! He felt some little indignation against the Colonel, and the coldness of his address was very visible; the other found he had rather gone on too rapidly, and studied how to retrieve his error, lest he should be deprived of future advantages.—“Dear Beaumont, (cried he) don’t hurry yourself to pay the money; you will have opportunities of taking your revenge;—two or three nights hence the balance may be yours.”—“You are very obliging Colonel, but I chuse to pay the money now.”—“Curse me, if I take it, (retorted the other;) I don’t want the money; and, at any rate, I positively will not take your last night’s losings; you were out of spirits, the recent loss of your pocket-book was in your head, in short, you did not attend to the game, and my friend here and I are determined thus to cancel the obligation;” saying this, and giving Mr. Banger a look which was well understood, they took the notes and put them into the fire—this certainly had the appearance of great generosity, Lord Stormer acknowledged it as such; Sir William felt staggered, but strenuously insisted upon paying the money; which was as obstinately refused; and the Colonel, affecting an asperity in his manner, said, “Do you take us for gamblers, Sir William, who wish to take advantage of your absence of mind and pick your pocket? we play as friends, and scorn advantages; therefore be satisfied we will not accept your last night’s losings.”—There was an apparent openness and generosity in this conduct

duct which was calculated to chase all suspicion and displeasure from the mind of the Baronet; his opinion, which was never very decisive, now wavered extremely, and in a few minutes turned entirely in the Colonel's favor—he consented, though with some reluctance, to retain the money, and when pressed to meet the accustomed party in the evening, lamented his being engaged to Lady Mandeville's rout, which precluded him from that pleasure.—“O, (cried Lord Stormer,) she is a sort of a relation of mine; faith, I'll be one of your party;—Colonel, what say you.—the good lady will thank you for adding to her croud”—“With all my heart answered the Colonel,) 'tis indifferent to me where I spend the evening.”—then, taking the Baronet by the arm, well (said he, whispering,) what success with Miss Rivers.” “'Tis all over, (answered the other,) she despises my offers, refuses to see or hear from me, retires into the country, and Lady Beaumont undertakes to settle her handsomely.—Certainly, Colonel, you were deceived in your opinion of that girl;—whatever the mother may be, Miss Rivers is not devoid of principle or virtue.”—An ambiguous smile, from Minors, a shake of the head, and an “ah, Beaumont, you are a novice in the arts of the sex, and lady Beaumont a mighty good woman,” again filled the mind of Sir William with doubt respecting Miss Rivers; and this doubt, added to the Colonel's late generous conduct, encreased his confidence in his dangerous friend more than ever.—They parted with great cordiality, and although at his return, Lady Beaumont's relation had some effect on him, yet, he rather assented to,

to, than believed in the character she gave of Miss Rivers, and made his mind pretty easy as to what had passed.

C H A P. XIII.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ROUT.

AT the usual hour, Sir William accompanied his mother to Lady Stanley's, and from thence to Lady Mandeville's in Portland-place: this assembly was an entertainment quite new to him, a suite of rooms were elegantly lighted up, and crowded with company of both sexes, dressed in the highest style of fashion and elegance; while the lady of the mansion bustled about to accommodate her guests, and fatigued herself with fruitless efforts to settle the crowd into parties, for it was impossible to be attentive to such a multitude.—All this bustle, and the continual arrival of fresh persons greatly amused Sir William, till, in a moment, his attention was entirely caught by a lovely girl introduced by her mother to Lady Mandeville and received with much kindness and respect:

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he thought he had never seen so charming a creature, and observing Lord Stormer among the croud, he, with some difficulty, made his way to him and directing his eyes to the object which attracted his notice, asked him if he knew that lovely girl?—"I never saw her 'till to night; (replied the other,) but the old lady is the Countess Dowager Summers, and I recollect hearing she had lately introduced her grand-daughter at court, where she attracted much admiration; doubtless that young lady is the person."—"She is very beautiful, (cried Sir William;) I wish I could get acquainted with her!" Just as this desire was expressed, he observed Mr. and Miss Thornhill in conversation with Lady Summers; he hastily made his way towards them, and addressing Mr. Thornhill and his sister, was received with great attention, and by them announced to the two ladies, with whom he endeavoured to join conversation: he found the old lady polite but stiff and formal, the young one all spirits and vivacity.—Miss Summers was the daughter of a younger son of the late Earl, he was a Colonel in the army and married a daughter of Sir James Rich, with whom he had a fortune of thirty thousand pound, which was settled on the children; she unfortunately dying in child-bed of this young lady, the Colonel did not long survive her, but left his infant daughter, with about forty thousand pounds, to the care of his mother and a Mr. Raikson, a capital merchant in the city—at a proper age she was sent to a school of high reputation, where she had constantly resided 'till within the last twelvemonth; when, being seventeen, her grand-mother thought it expedient to take her home.—This
young

young lady, with a very beautiful person and an exceeding good understanding, had naturally much levity and giddiness of temper—the high price paid for her board, the liberal presents she was permitted to make the governess and teachers, had ensured her such kind treatment and great indulgences, that her faults were often forgiven, and her omissions passed over. She neither wanted understanding nor genius, neither was she deficient in good-humour and the requisites to make herself esteemed; but accustomed to flattery, to indulgence and preference, an habitual idleness crept upon her, and though taught every thing, she was a proficient in nothing, yet, from having a smattering of music, drawing, Italian and French, she was extolled as a prodigy, and her performance, (though chiefly executed by the teachers,) was shown to her friends and guardians as wonderful proofs of her skill and ingenuity. The winter before she left school she was invited to spend the Christmas vacation with Mr. Raikson's family, which consisted of three daughters, brought up under the eye of an amiable respectable mother, and assisted in their education by a lady, as governess, whose abilities, disposition and accomplishments would do honor to the first circles, and under whose care her young pupils had made such improvements in every useful and ornamental branch of education as rendered them the pride of their instructress and the admiration of all who had the happiness of knowing them. Mrs. Summers had been but a very few days an inhabitant of Mr. Raikson's mansion before she was conscious and ashamed of her own deficiencies; but too volatile to attend to instruction, and too indolent to set about im-

provement, although she was earnestly desirous of being like the amiable Miss Raiksons, she wanted resolution to conquer idle habits and copy their example.—The lady who superintended the education of these young ladies saw, with a generous concern, the deficiencies of Miss Summers, which proceeded neither from a bad heart nor a want of genius:—there was a seminary of distinguished reputation which she ventured to mention as a proper situation to complete this young lady's education, but Mr. Raikson, from a peculiar delicacy towards Lady Summers, would not *recommend* what she had not *chosen*, nor interfere in a province which he thought was solely her's: as he had in fact only the care of his ward's fortune, which he had most liberally improved. Miss Summers was so sensible of the marked difference between her and her young friends, that though devoid of envy, she had too much pride to endure inferiority, and therefore shortened her visit; and never ceased teasing her grand-mother 'till she was recalled from school where she was conscious she learned nothing, and where the confinement began to grow very irksome. She had been at court and twice to public assemblies before her appearance at Lady Mandeville's rout, where her charms obtained much admiration.—She was much pleased with Sir William Beaumont's person and address; and this being the first time she had been singled out as the principal object to be entertained, she felt herself much flattered by his attentions and inclined to be very grateful for his preference. Sir William declining cards, and Miss Summers doing the same, they passed great part of the evening together, in company with Miss Thornhill, who politely reproached

Sir

Sir William for being so great a stranger—he found Miss Thornhill had been some time at the same school with Miss Summers, though she left it four years before the latter, and being in habits of intimacy with Mr. Raikson's family, the ladies had often met the preceding winter, and thereby renewed their school friendship. Lady Summers, who had a great esteem for the Thornhill family, was very desirous of cultivating an intimacy between her grand-daughter and Miss Thornhill; she was very sensible that minds well informed like her's and the Miss Raikson's were much more calculated to improve Miss Summers than the generality of ladies brought up in dissipation, and governed by frivolity and fashion: she earnestly therefore entreated Miss Thornhill to call often in Grosvenor-street, and told Sir William she should take the liberty to send a card to Lady Beaumont to invite her and her son to meet some of their friends at her next party—Sir William was highly delighted at this opening of an intimacy between the families; he was already in love with Miss Summers, more so than a prudent young man would have been at first sight; but the natural violence of his temper carried him away, and he was convinced the fondness he fancied he had for Miss Rivers bore no proportion to his feelings for Miss Summers. The evening passed rapidly, and when the hour of separation arrived, the Baronet regreted the loss of his lively companion. When in the carriage, he asked Lady Beaumont if she had any acquaintance with Lady Summers? “Very little (replied she;) I visited her before I retired into the country to reside, but we had no intimacy.” “Lady Summers, I believe, is desirous of renewing the acquaintance;

quaintance; she mentioned her intention of sending you a card for her next party." "She is very obliging," (said Lady Beaumont, in a reserved tone.) The fact was, she had observed the extraordinary attention her son had paid to Miss Summers, and was displeased at it; she thought his recent affair with Miss Rivers, and its disagreeable consequences, ought to have made some serious impression upon him, and felt hurt at his want of sensibility, and frivolity of behaviour. Sir William saw, from her serious manner of speaking, she was not well pleased with him; he therefore changed the subject, and chatted on indifferent matters. When they arrived at home, and he retired to rest, he could think only of his new favourite; her situation was such as to preclude all thoughts of her in any other stile than as a wife, and to matrimony he had an insuperable dislike. After tormenting himself for some hours with various schemes, he at length determined to consult Colonel Minors, to whom as we before observed, he was now more attached than ever.

Mean time the Colonel was not idle; he had been very much struck with Miss Summers herself, and easily discerned the impression she had made on Sir William; he paid a good deal of attention to the young lady's behaviour, and, from the general tenor of it, drew some conclusions very unfavourable to her, though flattering to his own views. The following morning he paid a visit to Sir William's breakfast table, and from him received an account of the final conclusion of the affair with Miss Rivers; and although this artful man must have been conscious that to his pernicious advice the unhappy termination was greatly

greatly owing, he felt no compunction ; but, on the contrary said, “As lady Beaumont had taken upon her, he had no doubt to provide a handsome addition to their income, he thought both mother and daughter were extremely well off. What a devilish fine girl is that Miss Summers (continued he;) and a capital fortune too I hear; forty thousand pounds ! But she will soon be one of the ton ; a fine spirit, faith !” “ She really is a charming girl (said Sir William;) but pray, Colonel, what do you mean by one of the ton ?”—“ Why, a rake in petticoats ; that is, she will dress extravagantly, play deep, flirt with every smart fellow, and, if she marries, procure her husband *many friends*.” “ And is this your real opinion of her ?” “ Yes ; one hour’s observation last night let me into her character—I am seldom mistaken :”—“ Sometimes, (said the Baronet, rather gravely;) witness Miss Rivers.” “ Pho, nonsense ! (answered the Colonel, you managed matters very ill there, or my prognostics would have been verified, I am certain ; but pray how stands your heart affected towards this lovely girl ?” “ I am really her conquest, (replied Sir William,) and intend to shew myself at the house this morning.”—“ Very well (said the Colonel,) and I intend accompanying you ; so let’s saunter a turn or two in the park, and then visit this new star.” Sir William, unpractised in the arts of shuffling off an intruder, and not possessed of resolution enough to venture at a denial, tho’ he was convinced the Colonel was a stranger to the ladies, and that his slight knowledge of them scarcely warranted the introduction of another, yet found himself compelled to give way, and introduce a friend where he had never yet been received.

received as a visitor himself; but he felt dissatisfied, and with no very good grace accompanied the Colonel in the projected ramble. The preceding evening was marked with more than one conquest; Lord Stormer was violently captivated with Miss Thornhill; he had hitherto felt no particular inclination for any of the sex; for his attachment to the Lady he had brought from abroad was of a different kind: A man of fashion must have his opera girl, or mistress of some sort; she was beautiful, fashionable, and extravagant, three absolute requisites; she had spirit too to maintain a dominion over him, and obtain all the advantages she could wish for in such a connexion;—but having wasted his fortune, and the resources of the gaming table being insufficient to answer her demands, she had long since given up any exertions to please him; and her beauty being grown familiar, he could not always submit to her caprice and exorbitant calls for the supply of her purse; in consequence of this disagreement, the gentleman was seldom with her, and she was looking out with a determination to accept the first generous offer she received. Thus situated was Lord Stormer when he saw Miss Thornhill at Lady Mandeville's; though struck with the graces of her person, he was still more captivated by her conversation and manners, (for he got introduced to her thro' Sir William Beaumont.) It has been before observed, that Lord Stormer had naturally a good heart, and was not deficient in understanding; and had he fallen into better hands in the early part of his life, would no doubt have been an ornament to society; as it was, though his principles had been corrupted, yet they were not totally abandoned; he honor-
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ed virtue, though he followed the example of the vicious, and would often breathe a wish to himself that he could recover part of his shattered fortune, and be enabled to renounce play for ever. He was in one of his repentant hours when he entered Lady Mandeville's; he was conscious of the arts made use of by the Colonel and Mr. Bangor to deceive Sir William, and felt humbled and mortified at being an accomplice in the deceit: His heart, therefore, was open to receive a virtuous impresson, and Miss Thornhill appeared in his eyes a divinity surrounded by the Graces: That night created in him a new soul; he returned from the rout with the most serious resolutions, which he determined to put in practice. In the morning he acquainted his lovely Signora he could no longer support her, gave her a thousand pound note, and requested her removal; she was desirous of dismissal, and received this intelligence with such a degree of insolence and haughtiness, as left no regret on the mind of Lord Stormer respecting the separation. He then sent for his solicitor and steward, told them his determination to sell every thing, and pay off his debts; desiring to have an exact list of them, together with an estimate of what would be left out of the wreck of his fortune; and should the residue prove worthy Miss Thornhill's acceptance, he resolved to make her a tender of it. With these good, though hasty resolutions, he set about a reformation in every part of his household; and 'tis incredible to think how much he executed in one day.

A FASHIONABLE VISIT.

BETWEEN the hours of two and three, the Colonel and Sir William called at Lady Summers's door; they were so fortunate to find their divinity at home, and being announced, Sir William introduced Colonel Minors as his particular friend, who was ambitious of being known to Lady and Miss Summers. The old lady received him with a reserved civility; the young one with the highest gaiety and good humour. A very lively conversation of small talk ensued.—Miss Summers thanked Heaven for her escape from school; the Colonel, though he congratulated her, affected to regret it, as an event destructive to his peace, and that of a thousand others. The presence of Lady Summers was some restraint, but what he did say, and the language of his eyes, were sufficiently expressive to this sprightly young lady, and put her in high good humour.—Sir William, to his inexpressible vexation, found himself a mere cypher; he was scarcely permitted to join in the conversation, and answered Lady Summers, who paid him much attention, in such a strange absent manner as evidently diverted the others;—happily an object entered the room, which engaged the attention of all, and diverted his chagrin. Mr. and Mrs. South were announced; the young gentleman handed in his mother; he was between nineteen and twenty, tall, fair, and genteely made, but a complete Narcissus; perfumed from head to foot, his very hands were washed in lavender water, his hair most nicely curled, and such a delicacy in his whole appearance as rendered it difficult to determine whether he was of the
masculine

masculine or feminine gender. "My lady, (said Mrs. South) I have brought my son George, to wait on you and Miss—Bless me, what a fine girl she is grown—really Miss Summers, you are vastly improved!" "Doubtless, madam, (answered the young lady,) a few weeks entrance into life, and the advantage of polite company, like Mrs. South's, will enable me to shake off the rusticity of a boarding-school." "O, dear, (cried Mr. South, rubbing his white hands) I am sure it would be a horrid shame to conceal that sweet that pretty face; but, dear miss, who cut your hair? 'Tis shockingly done: And your handkerchief too is frightful; permit me to recommend my milliner to you; she has an excellent taste; I can give you some delightful tooth-powder too, and teach you to keep your nails in exact order, all which has been neglected at school, I dare say." You are very obliging, Sir, (answered Miss Summers) I shall certainly be thankful for your instructions." —"Indeed, Miss Summers, no one is more capable of giving it, for George pays great attention to those things; he generally spends his hours till dinner at his toilet, and is so nice, he washes his very hands in lavender water." "O yes, miss, I will send you some, and an almond wash-ball, and some tooth powder too." Miss politely thanked him; and during this edifying conversation, the Colonel and Sir William had exchanged several sarcastic smiles at the expence of this Adonis; the former addressing him with great solemnity, "Pray, Sir, have you read the last new publication, Bruce's Travels?"—"Lord, Sir, no; I seldom read much; I ha'n't time; for what with dressing, eating, and visiting, I am continually engaged:—

ed:—Pray, Sir, what is it about?”—“A very comprehensive question; (said the Colonel) really, Sir, the subject is so wonderful, 'tis impossible to give you any idea of it by description; I would advise you to peruse the work; it only consists of five immense volumes.” “Five volumes! (repeated Mr. South, staring;) why, I should never read five volumes through as long as I live; I now and then peep into a fashionable novel, and look over the “Toilet of Flora” whilst my hair is dressing; but really reading is too fatiguing for me; it spoils one's eyes.”—“Very true, Sir, (said Sir William;) I am not fond of poring over books myself; I think it a much more agreeable entertainment to admire the beautiful works of nature in such objects as we have now before us.” “Indeed, Sir, (said Mrs. South, bridling) you are very polite; and I am sure George will be happy in your acquaintance; he wants to go into the Guards, but I don't like the army; for if he should be ordered on duty, I should break my heart at parting with him:”—“O, ma'am, (said the Colonel) the Guards are seldom ordered abroad; and such a pretty gentleman is quite calculated to shine on the parade.”—“The very thing Sir, I say to mother (cried Mr. South.) You know the officers of the Guards must be all men of fashion and fortune; they must be smart in their persons and dress; then they are always about with the ladies, which is what I like; and as for duty, it is nothing at all; a drill *serjeant* would teach me that in a week, and a suit of regimentals looks so beautiful! Pray, miss, don't you like an officer?”—“O, of all things, (replied Miss Summers,) I doat on a scarlet coat and cockade.” “There now, madam,

dam, did'nt I tell you so? Well, miss, make yourself easy, I will have a scarlet coat in a very short time, then I hope, (stopping and smiling) I hope—you will come and see me on the parade.”—“Doubtless, Sir,” (replied she.) “And I, Sir, (said the Colonel) shall hope to be honored with your acquaintance.” “Sir, I shall be proud to be your companion.”—Lady Summers, tired of this uninteresting conversation, addressed Sir William, enquiring if his uncle Lord Maybank ever came to town? “No, madam, (answered he;) my uncle resides entirely at Lockbar Castle; my mother very seldom hears from him; she has, indeed, several times expressed a wish to see him, but, as he constantly avers he never will come to England, and never intimated a desire of a visit from her or me; there is little probability we shall meet.” “Has he any children? (asked her ladyship) “One daughter only, madam, who is brought up under her mother's care, and is now about eighteen.” “I remember Lady Maybank, (said the old lady) when she was presented at Court, and a most charming woman I thought her. My Lord soon took her to Scotland, from whence, I believe, she has never returned.”

Whilst Lady Summers was addressing Sir William, the Colonel was busy in entertaining Miss Summers and Mr. South, in taking a minute observation of his dress, and anticipating the delightful addition a scarlet coat would be to his pretty person. Mrs. South sat admiring her son; and every party was satisfied but Sir William; he really began to feel an inquietude about Miss Summers which he had never before experienced, and envied every word and look she bestowed on another:—his visit had already been of an unfashionable length, but he felt no inclination

inclination to withdraw, till a thundering at the door annouced other visitors; and as the Colonel started up to take leave, Sir William was reluctantly compelled to follow his example. "Well, Colonel, (said Sir William after they had left the house,) what is your opinion of Miss Summers?"—"I think her a good fine girl (answered he with an air of indifference,) but not so handsome as I first thought her; she does not seem very clever, and has much of the coquet already in her manners."—"Then, (replied the Baronet,) she is no great favorite of your's?"—"I have certainly seen many girls I like much better." Sir William was disconcerted, he did not wish Minors should be charmed with Miss Summers, yet, he was displeased at the indifferent opinion he entertained of her. Being in no humour for conversation they soon separated with a mutual promise of meeting in the evening. When Sir William returned home he found Sir Edward and Lady Stanley, who having called on his mother, had been prevailed on to take a family dinner with her. He accosted them with politeness, but there was a reserve in his manner which hurt Lady Beaumont, though her guests were too polite to remark it: "How comes it, my young friend, said Sir Edward, (giving him a friendly shake by the hand,) that we never have the pleasure of seeing you? Lady Stanley is quite jealous, she flattered herself with having a smart young *cicisbeo* to gallant her about, forgetting that 'tis only at Vienna a woman of forty is in her prime."—"I beg your pardon, Sir Edward, (said she,) you are perfectly mistaken; some of the handsomest and most fashionable women we have at present, are nearly of that age; and why, pray, should I despair?"

dispar"—“You certainly ought not to do so, madam, (answered Sir William, bowing,) your ladyship is sufficiently attractive to make Sir Edward tremble at the admiration you excite.”—“Well said; (cried Sir Edward,) upon my word you are wonderfully improved: I am sure you bid fair to be a favorite with the middle-aged ladies at least.”—“With ladies of *all* ages, (said Lady Stanley, smiling,) we are none of us proof against dear delightful flattery.—But, pray, madam, (added she, turning suddenly to Lady Beaumont,) have you seen any thing of the Rivers’s lately? I have called twice at the door, and been told each time, Mrs. Rivers was out and her daughter not well: I am afraid some additional troubles have befallen those unfortunate people. This question threw both the mother and son into a confusion, so very obvious that Lady Stanley was astonished; Sir Edward, more penetrating, quickly concluded there was some mystery in the matter and fixing his eyes on Sir William, before Lady Beaumont had recovered herself; “I really pity Miss Rivers, (said he,) and wish she could get well married; she is an amiable girl and her want of fortune ought to be no obstacle to a man who is independent.”—“True, (replied Lady Stanley,) it *ought not*; but folly and dissipation make such large demands on the fortunes of young men now-a-days, and the ladies also, have so many unavoidable expences, if they mix with the world, that really a fortune on one side only is scarcely sufficient to answer the abundant calls for the gratification of vanity.”—“Tis indeed to be lamented (said Lady Beaumont, a little recovered, that the dissipation of the age is such, that people whose income depends solely

ly on their life can hardly avoid falling into a train of expences in the end ruinous to their families." Lady Stanley saw from this general observation, and evasion of her question, there was some secret she was unacquainted with, and without having the smallest idea of the nature of this secret, she concluded some real misfortune had happened to Mrs. or Miss Rivers, and, from the benevolence of her disposition, determined to call the following morning and offer her services to them. In the mean time the thoughtless Mrs. Rivers was busied in preparing for her expedition to France; she very readily acceded to her daughter's wishes relative to giving up the two thousand pounds for the annuity of 400l. a year; and, with an affected generosity, told Miss Rivers, she should always, on the quarterly payments, remit her some little presents:—the poor girl, who every day felt more humbled, and more deeply regretted her past errors, assured her mother, she was fully satisfied with her bounty, and requested she would not deny herself any pleasures or conveniences to accommodate her with what must be superfluous in the style of life she meant to adopt.—Mrs. Rivers called her a fool, adding; "you might do much better if you would, why don't you resolve to accompany me to France, and by a proper marriage atone for your follies? had you acted as you ought to have done, you might have been Lady Beaumont, and an honor to me instead of a disgrace"—"Spare your reproaches, my dear madam, (interrupted the poor weeping girl;) my own heart sufficiently upbraids me.—Forget your unworthy daughter—and whatever becomes of me may you be happy!"—Mrs. Rivers turned from her with a re-
petition

petition of the word *fool*! blest are those persons whose desires are bounded by reason, and whose passions are regulated by discretion! *their* pleasures are unalloyed by repentance; no self-reproach imbitters their hours; calm content, “the sunshine of the breast” affords them that happiness which is vainly sought for in dissipated pleasures.—True happiness can only be met with in the bosom of our families, and in the discharge of our several duties:—had Mrs. Rivers acted with discretion in the early part of life; or, even after the death of her husband, submitted to her situation, and endeavoured to reconcile her daughter to the great change in her circumstances, what anguish might she have spared that unfortunate girl!—Painful no doubt, it is to sacrifice our inclinations, to give up friends, and forsake the amusements we are fond of; but then it is so pleasing to fulfill our duty, to be conscious we are acting with propriety, and in such a manner as to secure the esteem of the valuable part of mankind, that the recompense over-pays the pain:—but the thoughtless woman, whose precepts and example had contributed to the ruin of her child, saw only the disappointment of her schemes in procuring riches and splendour, without feeling remorse for the unworthy part she had acted; and, when she found all her projects frustrated, was mean enough to accept and rejoice in the acquisition of that income which ought to have filled her with shame and confusion, and to the enjoyment of which a feeling mind would have preferred the most abject poverty.

Sir Edward and Lady Stanley left Stanhope-street early in the evening, and Sir William repaired to his usual haunt; where he experienc-

ed his usual bad fortune; but he now ceased to make himself uneasy on this account, by reflecting, that a lucky hit might restore the immense sums he had lost; and consequently, his inclination for gaming daily gained strength. Thus did he become enamoured of the vice he once thought he detested, and to which, in fact, he had no propensity, till his unfortunate connection with Colonel Minors: this gentleman had now a new card to play; some errors he had been suspected of committing at whist occasioned a shyness towards him on the part of his brother officers, which he could ill brook, and which, if talked of, might produce disagreeable consequences: he sometimes thought of felling out; but then the money would be soon spent, and he bereft of every resource except the gaming-table, which, though at present under contribution to him, might not continue so: having weighed these things, he resolved, as a matter of prudence, to address Miss Summers: forty-thousand pounds, with the depredations he intended to make on the Baronet's purse, he thought, might settle him comfortably; besides, her connections were such as must be of service to him; the girl was very pretty too, but this was only a secondary consideration: he had taken some pains to enquire about her fortune, and found she was entitled to it on the day of marriage, or when twenty-one, without any restrictions; he therefore determined to avail himself of Sir William's introduction and endeavour to secure the young lady's affection, but it was his wish to conceal his design from Sir William, as he perceived a growing regard on his part for the young lady.

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The following day he paid an early visit to Miss Summers, dressed in all his glittering ornaments; Lady Summers happened to be engaged with some trades people, he failed not to make the most of his time, and impressed the young lady with a very favourable opinion of him—after a pretty long *tête à tête* he left her to call on Lord Stormer, whose absence the preceding evening had surprised him; he found him at home, up to his elbows in papers.—“What the devil, Stormer, are you about? (cried he:) signing parchments, granting long leases, or looking out for a marriage settlement?” “I am only examining into the ruined state of my affairs, Colonel; and I find them even worse than I expected; they are indeed such as preclude my dearest hopes; but I shall proceed; I have summoned my creditors, and reserving only a small income to myself, shall give them the remainder.”—“Why, Stormer, are you mad? (said the Colonel,) what is all this for?—your late losses, sure, have turned your brain! if you want cash I can supply you: I believe I am in your debt for our last fleece of the Baronet.” “No, Colonel; I will have none of your money; and am heartily ashamed I was ever concerned in your projects:—to tell you the truth, the last deception practised on Sir William Beaumont opened my eyes to the baseness of our connection; shame and remorse assailed me; and another circumstance, which deeply affected me, confirmed my resolution of withdrawing from such a dishonourable partnership.”—“What the devil possesses you? (cried Minors,) are you going to turn methodist or moravian?” “No; (answered Lord Stormer,) but I am trying to awake from a long delusive dream

dream which has afforded me neither rest nor peace: in short, Colonel, I am sick of gambling, deceit and perfidy. My reformation is something sudden I confess; but for this week past I have felt dissatisfied, and some recent circumstances have effected my cure." "I am really astonished," (returned the Colonel: Is this Lord Stormer, who was always the first to lead in every sort of dissipation? is he turned puritan, and going to preach against vice?" "No," (replied Lord Stormer,) I do not entertain so vain an idea as to hope, by any arguments of mine, to make converts; I only chuse to act for myself. It is my intention to go abroad, and, by economy, redeem some part of my shattered fortune."—"What, and indulge with your charming Signora?" interrupted the Colonel, smiling, "That lady and I have parted to meet no more.—I go alone, for I have neither friends nor companions who will think it worth while to accompany a man reduced in circumstances!" "Well, of all the strange occurrences one daily meets with, your frolic is the most extraordinary;—it will excite wonder beyond the limited nine days."—"That shall give me no concern; but let me intreat you, Colonel, to give over your depredations on Sir William Beaumont; he appears a young man not deficient in good sense or good nature; unacquainted with the world, he falls an easy prey; but be content with your present gains, nor pursue any further sinister designs against him"—"Or the consequence will be, I suppose," (said the Colonel,) that, from the *rectitude of your principles*, you will turn informer, and impeach your quondam friend." "You cannot think so meanly of me; no, sir, all that is past is with me forgotten; but I certainly

I certainly will, if a fair opportunity offers, persuade Sir William to follow my example, and forego play whilst his fortune is not irreparably injured like mine." "And you think this will be acting like a man of honor?" "I do, Colonel; honor impels me to save a worthy man from ruin. Let me ask you, What mighty pleasures or advantages we have derived from our late disgraceful schemes? the money we have fleeced, as you properly term it, from the Baronet, we have lost again to others as knowing as ourselves: we have lived for some time in constant habits of winning, from the ignorant and unwary, to lose again to the skilful and designing; our fortunes, our health, temper, and every good quality of the mind has been sacrificed to one pernicious propensity, from which we, in fact, receive neither pleasure nor profit; rich to day, in want to-morrow, and in a constant agitation of spirits."—"Hold, hold, cried the Colonel, enough of preachments.—Ha! ha! ha! why really your quick and wonderful conversion exceeds Katterfelto's wonders all to nothing; but as the same spirit of reformation does not at present actuate me, I shall leave you to your utopian scheme, with this observation, however, that I shall soon judge from Sir William Beaumont's conduct, whether you use *me* dishonorably, and shall take my measures accordingly." Thus saying, he hastily quitted the house; very much surprised and chagrined; for although he could win no more from Lord Stormer, yet, he was an associate, who gave credit to the party; besides the world, which would soon know he was a ruined man, might cast disagreeable reflexions on his companions:—determined, therefore, to get above

the censure of the world, which is always wonderfully complaisant, to a man in affluence, the Colonel saw the necessity of pursuing his designs on Miss Summers, and endeavouring to circumvent Sir William. Such are the motives that actuate men, who, from habits of gaming, chicanery and deceit, grow callous to every virtuous feeling of the soul! dead to every sentiment of friendship, honor or gratitude, they live only for themselves, and to gratify their own wishes, scruple not to sacrifice the happiness of those they call their dearest friends! a man of fashion and education enters into society with many advantages; the world is prepared to esteem him, because from such a man honorable sentiments and behaviour are expected:—but how soon do improper connections, dissipation and extravagance, under the names of gallantry and fashion, ruin his morals, impair his fortune, and reduce him to the meanest expedients to preserve a sinking credit! happy would it be for the dissipated and the vicious if they considered, that when a man ceases to preserve his own consequence and forfeits the approbation of his own heart, the world will estimate him accordingly; he will obtain only scorn and reproach from the companions of his follies, and, at best, but a contemptuous pity from the sensible and worthy! Colonel Minors had long since subdued the reproaches of conscience, and forgot the lessons of his respectable father; habituated to vice the basest schemes cost him nothing; and as he thought affluence and prosperity must ensure every man a welcome into the society of the gay and fashionable, he resolved to obtain riches at any rate.

C H A P. XIV.

CIRCUMVENTION.

FOR several days Sir William and the Colonel pursued one general plan; they visited Miss Summers of a morning, joined her evening parties, and at night met their friends at Brookes's: and so infatuated was Sir William, respecting Colonel Minors, that he neither saw his designs on Miss Summers, nor regretted the money he continually lost to him at play: and when the twenty thousand pounds he had in the bank was gone, he scrupled not to raise money by granting an annuity on his estate.

Lady Beaumont, who had been a painful observer of his actions, though she little suspected his great losses, one day when he did her the favor to dine at home, a thing now not very usual with him, took occasion to mention his apparent attachment to Miss Summers, and asked, if he had any serious design of addressing her? he was rather disconcerted, but replied, "He really liked her very much, though he had not yet made up his mind to think of marrying; but, when he had, Lady Beaumont should

should be the first person consulted.”—“ And you will find, my dear William, (said she) that I shall deserve your confidence ; the young lady mentioned is young and volatile, but she is of a worthy family, and a few years hence, perhaps, may prove an ornament to it ; I therefore neither persuade you for, nor against addressing her ; only remember, Miss Summers is a woman of family, who will not fail to resent any improper behaviour on your part.—This morning (she continued) I have received two cards of invitation, the one I have accepted to oblige you, the other to please myself :—this, is from Lady Summers for a rout next Thursday ; that, from Mr. and Miss Thornhill to spend the day with them on the Monday after : I hope you will accompany me to both places.” Sir William replied, “ He would attend her with pleasure.” “ I have (resumed she,) just received an answer to a letter I wrote to procure Miss Rivers an eligible situation ; I shall therefore spend this afternoon with that poor girl, and hope she will soon be settled to her wishes.”—“ May I ask where ?” said Sir William, “ No, replied Lady Beaumont, it can be of no consequence to you to know more than that the situation is approved of by herself and me.”—“ I sincerely wish her happy, (said he, rising,) and I hope, madam, if any part of my fortune can make her so, you will command it.” He left her at these words, and she ordered the carriage to take her to Green-street.—When she arrived Miss Rivers was alone ; a deep melancholy had taken possession of her features, but her countenance looked composed, though sad ; she received Lady Beaumont with the warmest expressions of gratitude for her kind visit, adding, that

that her mother had been in the city all day.”—
 “ My visit, said her ladyship, is entirely to you, my dear girl : I have received an answer from Mrs. Wilkins, such a one as I hope you will approve : she read the letter ; Mrs. Wilkins most thankfully accepted the honor of the young lady’s company, and said, she would make it her study to accommodate her with every convenience and pleasure in her power to procure, adding that Miss Rivers might be assured, from her respect and love for her ever-honored lady, she would be happy to receive and attend any person dear to her.” Miss Rivers expressed her gratitude with tears of joy and thankfulness ; she saw, by the letter, how advantageously she had been recommended, and was eager to set out for a situation so desirable. It was settled that the second day after this she should begin her journey, and Lady Beaumont undertook to procure her every convenience. Miss Rivers said she had been very much hurried a few days before by a visit from Lady Stanley ; “ Her ladyship, (said she,) had called once or twice when my mother was out, and I declined seeing her ; but unfortunately this day, my mother came to the door just as the carriage drew up, and, without my knowledge, brought Lady Stanley up stairs to me :—I thought I should have fainted, she started with surprise, and kindly taking my hand, “ My dear Miss Rivers, (said she,) I cannot forgive myself for not seeing you before ; I find you are better ; but why would you conceal your illness from your friends ? ” I burst into tears.—Oh, madam, what can equal the self-reproach we feel at meeting with *undeserved* kindness ? I could not speak to her.—“ I see your spirits are weak ;
 (said

(said she,) endeavour to be well, my good girl, and I hope your circumstances will soon be made easier. Come and stay a month with me; Mrs. Rivers, will you and your daughter favor us so far?" This kind invitation, which a short time since we should have accepted with pride and pleasure, my mother politely declined, saying, "Change of air was necessary to restore my health, and therefore in a very few days we were going into the country."—her ladyship requested if we found it necessary to return to London this winter we would come to her, which we readily promised:—but I am sure Lady Stanley thinks there is something particular in my case; she eyed me with such curious, yet compassionate looks.—How rejoiced shall I be to quit this town, which was once, in my opinion, the only place fit to live in."—Before Lady Beaumont left Miss Rivers, her mother arrived, and Mrs. Wilkins's letter being communicated she readily agreed to set off from London at the time proposed; and it was settled that Mrs. Rivers should drop her daughter at Lady Beaumont's, and from thence to go on to Dover:—Every thing being thus fixed, she took leave with an encreasing esteem for the daughter and a sovereign contempt for the mother. Sir William mean time, when he left the house after dinner, had sauntered down through Hyde-park towards the Mall, intending to go round to St. James's-street—just before he got to the stable-yard, he was overtaken by Lord Stormer who had been strolling in the Mall.—"Ah, (said Sir William,) I am glad to see your lordship—what are you just arrived from the country?" "From the country!" (repeated Lord Stormer) I have not been in the

the country"—“ No ! why Minors told me so ; —but what is the meaning then that we have not seen you this week past ? ” “ Because I have been very busily engaged in looking into my affairs ; I find I can no longer afford to play, being utterly undone, and therefore am about to quit England. ” “ How ! (replied Sir William,) quit England, my Lord ! there surely is no necessity for that ;—you have friends who will gladly join to relieve you from any temporary difficulties. ”—“ That you are one of those who would not scruple to serve a friend, I am convinced, Sir William ; and I am grateful for your intended kindness ; but nothing at present can save or serve me—I have given up all for the benefit of my creditors ; they allow me 500l. a year, and within that sum I am determined to live in future ; but, as it cannot be done in England, I intend going to Flanders ; or perhaps to Italy ; France I shall avoid, as too many of my countrymen flock thither. ” “ But pray, (said Sir William) may I ask what has occasioned this sudden resolution ? ” “ I have already told you my fortune is gone ; but the evening we spent at Lady Mandeville’s, and some particular occurrences which interested me *there*, gave birth to the resolution of examining into the state of my affairs ; my motives for so doing avail nothing, and in going abroad I sacrifice all my wishes.—You, Sir William, are yet happily exempt from any difficulties, the sums you have lost cannot materially injure your fortune ; let me conjure you, then, to retreat in time. Play is fascinating, it steals imperceptibly upon us ; and every day adds to the infatuation ; the evils attending it are manifold, the loss of time and fortune are the least of

them—a few days serious reflection on my mortifying situation has taught me to judge properly—let me conjure you once more to retreat whilst you can do it with honor.”—“I am really so much surprised, (answered Sir William,) that I hardly know how to thank you for advice which is no doubt kindly meant.—How will the Colonel be astonished! he believes you in the country, and will scarcely credit my report.” “He is better informed than you think of, returned his lordship; but that is immaterial;—I must take my leave being engaged on business:—I will do myself the honor to call on you before I leave England; and believe me, Sir William, I feel sincerely interested in your happiness.”

Never was surprise greater than the Baronet's; his lordship's admonitions gave him some pangs; he was convinced of the truth of his observations, and he knew that in the course of a few weeks he had lost what by some would have been thought a princely fortune; at one moment he resolved to play no more; but then to give up all hopes of retrieving, to set down with losses so very considerable without having the chance of recovering them, he thought would be madness and folly:—if he could but regain ten thousand pounds, redeem his annuity and have some ready cash, he would give up play entirely and be contented to resign the other sums.—With this, (what he thought,) laudable resolution he went to seek the Colonel, whom he found at White's, and then related minutely his conversation with Lord Stormer. The Colonel trembled as he proceeded; but, when he found no accusation was made against himself, and that the Baronet was still ignorant of all his deceptions, he affected to turn the whole

whole into ridicule ; but perceiving it had made rather a serious impression on Sir William, he said, to you my friend, I will confide a *secret*, depending on your honor—known then Lord Stormer has been detected at some little finesse in play which has hurt his reputation, and is the real cause of his going abroad ; I expostulated with him on the subject, which occasioned a coolness, and I really thought he was in the country ; but upon the whole I think he is right to go abroad till the affair is blown over ; 'tis not generally known, and I hope I have succeeded in stopping some people's tongues." Such was the influence this artful man had acquired over Sir William that he readily gave credit to this slanderous invention ; and the growing esteem he had felt for lord Stormer was changed into contempt.—The two gentlemen knowing that Miss Summers was gone with a party to Drury-lane play-house, followed her thither, and after reconnoitring the house fixed themselves in a box adjoining to the party they looked for :—Miss Summers soon fell into chat with them ; but Lord Summers, who was in company, politely bowed to Sir William, but made a very distant one to the Colonel ; this he saw and felt, but having too much confidence to be easily abashed, he chatted with great freedom and unconcern to the ladies, whilst Sir William, from a real attachment to Miss Summers, expressed more by his looks than words, and but occasionally joined in conversation : perfectly satisfied that the Colonel had no views on the young lady, he felt no disquietude at his assiduities, but was pleased that his attentions precluded two or three other gentlemen who were of the party from being noticed. When the play ended there were several competitors for the hand of
Miss

Miss Summers which she, in defiance to the frowns of her uncle, resigned to the Colonel, who conducted her to the carriage, and then joined his friend. "Well, Sir William, (said he,) no bad omen for you,—your goddess could not openly shew her preference to you, but in giving her hand to your companion she certainly designed you a compliment."—"And do you really think so?" (cried the Baronet eagerly.) "To be sure I do; it is very obvious—O, I enjoyed the haughty uncle's disappointment; there is a Lord Fairfield who, I am told, is designed for her; but let us try if we cannot circumvent him; I am persuaded the young lady herself has no predilection in his favor."—"But would you seriously advise me to marry Miss Summers?" "Do you really like her?" "Certainly, I do, but yet I have no violent inclination to marriage."—"Nay, you must determine for yourself: between you and me, she is a great coquet, and unless you can be contented to see your wife quite *à la ton*; flirting with every pretty fellow, I would advise you against it; her fortune you do not want, and I am persuaded her person will soon prove a great incumbrance." "I know not what to determine on at present; I cannot relinquish her, but I shall take a little more time for observation before I think of making any serious addresses. Her uncle, Lord Summers, whom I only saw once at her house, treated me with great politeness, and if I chose to make an offer I don't think it would be refused."—"I dare say not, (answered the Colonel,) and therefore there is no necessity for hurrying matters." By this time they arrived at Brookes's, met their usual set, and pursued their usual mode of entertainment.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

PARENTAL AFFECTION IN A MODERN
FINE LADY.

THE day arrived in which Mrs. Rivers and her daughter were to take very different routes.—Without feeling the least concern for her unhappy child, Mrs. Rivers only blamed her obstinacy in refusing to accompany her to Paris; and when they arrived at Lady Beaumont's about one o'clock (an hour when Sir William was never home,) she alighted from the carriage and entered the house with the greatest unconcern imaginable: not so Miss Rivers; she shuddered, and could scarcely by the help of salts keep herself from fainting, although she was received with the greatest kindness by Lady Beaumont. “I have brought my daughter, and resign her to your ladyship's care;” (said Mrs. Rivers, with much nonchalance.) “I accept the trust, (said Lady Beaumont,) and flatter myself I shall deserve the confidence and affection Miss Rivers favors me with.”—“As the day is far advanced,

advanced, (resumed the other,) I have no time to lose; I must, therefore, make my acknowledgments to your ladyship and hasten on my journey. Adieu, my dear Anna, pray write to me as soon as I have acquainted you with my place of residence: take care and behave well, child, in order to deserve Lady Beaumont's kindness, and bring no more disgrace upon me."

—"Fie! Mrs. Rivers, exclaimed her ladyship, seeing the unhappy girl drowned in tears and unable to speak,) is this a time for such a cruel reflection? I venture; madam, to answer for Miss Rivers—she will not disgrace *you*,—may she have reason to be proud of her mother!" the poor girl advanced, and throwing her arms round her unfeeling parent, sobbed out!—"Forgive me, madam, for all the trouble I have occasioned you! henceforth you shall have no cause to complain of me. May Heaven bless my dear mother! may you enjoy health and happiness, and may no thought of me disturb your quiet!" Devoid of sensibility as Mrs. Rivers was, she could not help being a little affected, a few tears dropped from her eyes, and kissing her daughter, with some appearance of tenderness, she took leave of Lady Beaumont, stepped into the carriage, which waited, and pursued her way to Dover. It was some time before Miss Rivers could be composed, though Lady Beaumont soothed her with the kindest expressions—the stage which was to convey Miss Rivers to Exeter, set off in the evening, she was therefore to remain in her ladyship's dressing-room till the appointed hour, and was secure enough from seeing Sir William, a sight she dreaded worse than death.

CHAP. XVI

THE EFFECTS OF CREDULITY.

THAT same day soon after, Sir William returned to dress, he was informed Lord Stormer was come to wait on him—he repaired to the parlour under those unfavorable impressions the Colonel had instilled into his mind, and received his lordship with a politeness so reserved as was too obvious to be overlooked.—“Being about to quit the kingdom to morrow, Sir William, I called to have the pleasure of seeing you once more, and to know if I can do you any service abroad.” “Your lordship is very obliging; (answered the Baronet,) but I am equally unknown and unknowing out of England.” “You will pardon the observation, Sir William (resumed his lordship,) but, from the particular reserve which has taken possession of your features, I am inclined to judge you have been impressed with some unfavorable ideas of me since I had the pleasure of seeing you

you in the park." "Have you, sir, any reasons for indulging such a supposition?" asked Sir William gravely. "I have, (returned Lord Stormer,) I know my present design has met with the disapprobation of the party I have lately been connected with, and I entertain little doubt but they have inspired you with the same sentiments;—I have no right to censure, much less to advise; my own follies have been too glaring; but permit me to say, that if you would diversify your acquaintance, and not confine your knowledge of the world to one particular set, you would surely find your advantage in it." "I am obliged to your lordship for your advice, though it certainly implies a censure on those you once called your friends." "I can have no views to answer in what I say, (replied his lordship,) but simply a wish for your happiness, and you undoubtedly must act as you please:"—then, advancing and taking his hand; "adieu (continued he;) believe me sincerely interested in your welfare; and should I live to return to England, I shall be happy to cultivate your acquaintance and be ranked among the number of your friends."—There was something so open, so pleasing in Lord Stormer's voice and manner, that, in spite of his prejudices, Sir William's gravity insensibly relaxed; and, shaking his hand with great cordiality, he wished him health and happiness: but as soon as they had parted, the Colonel's insinuations to his disadvantage again occurred, again were credited, and he only felt contempt for the plausibility of Lord Stormer's manners; a man who could be guilty of any dishonest practices at play he justly considered as a scoundrel, who
would

would not scruple when temptations came in his way, to defraud and injure in other instances. Thus was he the dupe of the very artifice he despised! He next began to think of Miss Summers; the Colonel's opinion of her had great weight with him; yet he found himself so much attached that he could not bear to give her up. They had paid her several visits since the meeting at the play-houses. Whenever Lady Summers was at home, she always directed her attention to Sir William, and the others appeared pleased to have a *séte-à-tête*, in which the Colonel told him Miss Summers always explained herself much in his favor, but still represented her as fickle and trifling.

The evening of the day on which Lord Stormer had taken leave of him, Sir William went with the Colonel to Covent-Garden Theatre; in the box next them sat a lady, whose charms appeared to engage general admiration. "The lovely Signora is not inconsolable (said the Colonel) for the loss of her dear Lord." "Who do you mean?" (asked he) "Why, don't you know, replied, (the other) the lady next to us is lord Stormer's Bella Signora?"—"No, (said Sir William I never saw her till now: She is very beautiful." The Colonel then addressed her; they entered into a lively chat, in which the Baronet joined, and ended with the lady's asking the two friends to supper: they accepted her invitation, and accompanied her to Sackville Street, where she had very elegant apartments, and where they had a very genteel entertainment. Wit and good humor presided at the table, and Sir William, who had never till now been in company with a woman so fascinating

nating as this lovely Signora, forgot Miss Summers and every one but the charming object before him; they stayed till a late hour; Sir William asked and obtained permission to renew his visits, and when he quitted the house, was equally intoxicated with love and wine: Being extremely lavish in her praise, his artful companion laid hold of the opportunity to persuade him to take her into keeping. "Your affair with Miss Summers may keep cool, (said he) and the charming Signora will amuse your idle hours." The weak, irresolute intoxicated Baronet acceded to the proposal with transport, and determined, on the following morning, to make his proposals in form. Thus, by a gradation extremely natural from the unhappy connection he had formed, he soon became in every sense of the word a profligate; and without a natural propensity to a single vice, adopted every mode of dissipation and folly pointed out to him by others, and this in order to be considered as a man of fashion and gallantry. How many amiable dispositions, how many young men blest with understanding and a thousand good qualities, are sacrificed at the same shrine! Partake of follies which afford them no amusement, adopt the vices of their companions, and at last sink into a vortex of dissipation, which destroys their morals, injures their health, wastes their fortunes, and brings on a premature old age without one pleasant reflection, one benevolent good action, or one sensible virtuous companion to administer comfort to a mind diseased.

CHAP. XVII.

A FEMALE SEDUCER.

THE following morning Sir William scarcely allowed himself time for breakfasting, so eager was he to pay the proposed visit in Sackville Street: He found the fair Signora dressed in a style of elegance sufficiently captivating; she, well accustomed to the arts of pleasing, spared no pains to confirm her conquest, and was so successful in her endeavors, that, before they separated a mutual understanding took place, and Sir William consented to a very handsome settlement. She had the art to make him believe she had quitted Lord Stormer voluntarily, and, from her pique to him, scrupled not to set him forth in a most ridiculous point of view, which confirmed the Baronet in his prejudices against him: Nor was this all: Sensible that she could very well assist in dissipating his fortune, she wanted no partners to share in the plunder, and therefore threw out several oblique hints

hints against the Colonel, condemned play, and protested against an attachment to a man who devoted those hours to gambling, which ought to be engrossed by her alone.—Sir William was lavish in his promises, swore to forsake play, and every amusement in which his charming Signora had no participation; but endeavoured to combat her apparent dislike to the Colonel, by assuring her, that gentleman was warmly her friend. The hours flew unheeded away, and he scarcely reached home in time for dinner.—Unfortunately this was the day he had so much wished for, the day in which his mother had engaged to visit Lady Summers. But his sentiments had undergone a great change;—he acknowledged that Miss Summers was very lovely, but he no longer thought of her with those lively emotions of tenderness he felt a few days previous to this; the fascinating foreigner now engaged all his hopes and wishes, and the Colonel had reason to triumph in the success of his schemes, which left him at liberty to pursue Miss Summers with unremitting attention, and, by imperceptible degrees, make himself master of her heart. When Lady Beaumont claimed her son's promise of attending her to Grosvenor Street, he was highly chagrined. he had engaged himself to the Signora; and his embarrassment was very obvious. “How comes it, Sir William, (said her ladyship) that you appear confussed at my request? You know this visit of mine is intended solely to give you pleasure.” “To be candid, madam, (he replied with some hesitation) entirely forgetful of this engagement, I have entered into another, which it is impossible for me to break through, from some very particular circumstances attending it.”—“So, then,

then, you do not mean to accompany me?" (said she, both surprised and offended.) "Yes, madam, I will attend you there; but you must excuse my leaving you." "Your behaviour is very extraordinary. A few days since you were lavish in the praise of Miss Summers, and desirous of my cultivating an intimacy there; now you are indifferent, and plead other engagements which certainly are subsequent to your promise of attending me to Grosvenor-street—How inconstant is your conduct! You have no steadiness, nor can there be any reliance on your word."—"Your pardon, madam, (replied he, much piqued) if I presume to remind you the law at least supposes me arrived at years of discretion." He quitted the room with a careless air, and Lady Beaumont, bursting into tears, deplored the loss of his affection and confidence. "I see, (thought she, heavily sighing,) all my fears are realized; his principles, his morals, are become abandoned; and the wretches he associates with have succeeded in plunging him into vice and withdrawing him from all respect and gratitude to me: I have lost my influence: and, very shortly, I have no doubt, shall be deprived of his company entirely." With the most painful reflections she retired to her dressing-room, and reluctantly prepared herself for the evening's visit. Sir William went out after dinner, but returned in time to accompany his mother, and feeling a little confused at his late improper behaviour, met her with much complaisance, and endeavoured to appear cheerful and inspire her with good-humour. Lady Beaumont was received with distinguished preference by Lady Summers, who expressed herself in the most obliging terms,
nor

nor was the young lady wanting in her polite attentions—a vast deal of company was assembled, amongst whom Lady Beaumont with pleasure observed Mr. and Miss Thornhill, the Stanleys and Warners.—Sir William soon found a moment to steal off unobserved, and flew to his Bella Signora:—the Colonel came in soon after he quitted the room, and advancing to pay his compliments to Lady Beaumont, carelessly asked what was become of his friend? “I should rather ask you that question, sir, (said she very gravely;) for you are in general such inseparables that I cannot suppose you ignorant of his engagement this evening.” “Upon my honor, madam, (he replied) I am not in his confidence, neither have I the pleasure of his company so frequently as your ladyship supposes.—He then walked off to address Miss Summers, with whom he remained the best part of the evening.—Lady Beaumont was surprised at seeing him there, she was a stranger to what new connections her son had formed, and felt alarmed and uneasy: her two friends mentioned, with some little displeasure, Sir William’s total neglect of them; and Mr. Warner shaking his head, cried; “Aye, aye, poor Beaumont is acquiring a knowledge of the town very rapidly I believe, and he’ll pay dear enough for his experience.” This hint startled Lady Beaumont; she was apprehensive Mr. Warner knew more than he chose to communicate; and, turning to him quickly, are you, (said she,) acquainted then with the nature of his engagements or the names of his companions? “only from report: but Sir Edward Stanley can afford you better information.” “Indeed, I cannot; (replied Sir Edward,) I only know my relation, Lord Stormer,

is ruined and gone to the Continent ; and the same connections may possibly injure Sir William : but I mean to throw myself in his way some morning and be a little more explicit : I am surprised at seeing the Colonel without him.” To this Lady Beaumont could only reply, that she was totally ignorant how he spent his time.—“ Apropos, (said Sir Edward,) what is become of Mrs. and Miss Rivers ? we hear they are gone to France.” “ You were rightly informed ; (answered Lady Beaumont, I believe that was their design when they left Town—fresh people coming into the room they were separated, and Lady Beaumont placed herself by Lady Summers, and was much pleased with the old lady’s friendly politeness : at the same time she kept an attentive eye on *Miss*, who was entirely engrossed by the Colonel ; and she saw enough to justify her opinion that they were warmly attached to each other, and was surprised Lady Summers did not appear to observe what she thought so very visible.—After spending an evening of observation rather than of pleasure, her ladyship retired, having engaged the Stanleys and Warners to dine with her the following day. Sir William spent his evening with the Signora, who so well improved his prepossession in her favor that he came away intoxicated with her charms. Fresh sums were raised to adorn her and supply her with every elegance she thought fit to require :—the money which was saved in his minority was now all gone,—his payments from his estates were not yet come round—he had, ’tis true, about seven thousand pounds in the hands of Mr. Thornhill, but that he did not care to draw out, as it might subject him to some enquiries or remonstrances from
his

his mother which he chose to avoid; and therefore he paid exorbitant interest for money to supply his extravagancies. He met his mother's friends at dinner, behaved with much politeness but no freedom, and with a slight apology left them early in the evening, to the great mortification of Lady Beaumont.—When the day she had promised to spend with the Thornhills came, he absolutely declined going, without assigning any reason, but an engagement not to be dispensed with. On her return home from this visit she found two letters, the first she opened was from Miss Rivers, and to the following effect.—

“ Dearest Madam,

No words can sufficiently express the feelings of my heart, or convey to you my deep sense of your unmerited goodness: unworthy as I am, you have deigned to bid me look up to your protection and regard; precious is the remembrance;—and my study, for the remainder of my days, shall be to deserve it.—My journey was safe and pleasant, and when the stage entered the yard of the inn, I was accosted by Mr. and Mrs. Wilkins, the most friendly amiable couple I ever saw, who waited to receive me, and behaved with such kindness and expressions of esteem as called forth all my gratitude. I am indeed most agreeably situated, and if there was peace within my breast, should pronounce myself happy;—but ah, my dear madam, nothing can still the monitor within, and I look back with never ceasing regret on the past errors of my conduct. May you, my ever
respected

respected benefactress, experience every felicity this world can afford ! for the knowledge of your happiness is essential to my peace. I have as yet heard nothing from my mother—alas, I tremble for her !—however mistaken she has been in the means, she surely sought my happiness and advantage, and I have in return, covered her with disgrace, and perhaps, thrown her into situations which may end in misery.—Heaven forbid—but my prospects on that side are very gloomy. Pardon me, madam, for intruding my sorrows when I ought only to rejoice in your goodness, which is indelibly imprinted on the heart of, your ever-obliged and truly grateful,

Anna Rivers."

" Poor girl ! (exclaimed Lady Beaumont,) may her future days be happy ! alas my prospects are not more bright than her's."—She then took up the second letter, and was surprised to recognise the hand of her brother, Lord Maybank, who hardly ever wrote to her : She opened it hastily, and learned, that his lady was dead, and he on the point of coming to London to bring his only daughter and resign her to the care of his sister.

Lady Beaumont felt sincere grief for the loss of Lady Maybank ; for although there had been but little intercourse in the families, she knew she was amiable, respectable, and unfortunately married ; for Lord Maybank was quite a tyrant, and, from a high opinion of his own understanding, looked with contempt on most men, and all women—a disposition so unpleasant neither conciliated love nor friendship ; to preserve

peace, his lady submitted to his laws, and sacrificed her own good sense to his arbitrary temper; but as he had no such claims on society, his company was avoided. Those who were inferior to him in rank and fortune, were awed by his pride and supercilious manners, from presuming to visit him; and those few upon an equality with him, held him in too much contempt to brook his dogmatical and capricious behaviour. Lady Maybank was indeed generally esteemed, but no one seemed inclined to visit her, as it could not be done independent of seeing him also—Hence they lived almost alone in their solitary castle; and the sole amusement and employment of Lady Maybank was to educate her daughter; but in this she met so many obstacles from her Lord, who made no scruple of ridiculing his wife, that had not Miss Maybank been blest with a most happy disposition, and an excellent heart, she never would have acquired those virtues and accomplishments which now rendered her an ornament to her sex. She deeply felt the loss of her amiable mother, and was for a long time inconsolable, which so exasperated the pride of her tyrannic father, who could not bear the idea that she should regret a loss he thought of small consequence, that he took a most unjustifiable dislike to her; to which another circumstance contributed, a fondness he had contracted for his gardener's daughter, who being ambitious and artful, soon, by a perfect submission to his will, and a mean compliance with whatever commands he issued, obtained a greater ascendancy over him than ever his amiable wife could boast; he indeed grew so fond of her, that he was determined she should reside at the Castle; but as this could not
be

be done without highly offending the delicacy and reputation of his daughter, after various schemes to get rid of the objection, he resolved to take her to England. Her mother's fortune, a very considerable one, was to be her's when she came of age; he therefore determined to allow her 400l. a-year for the present, and flattered himself she might soon get well married, and he be rid of her for ever. Such were the thoughts of this *affectionate* father, in consequence of which he wrote to his sister. Lady Beaumont was delighted with the idea of having a companion in her niece; she had never seen her, but conceived the most flattering expectations from the character she had heard of the young lady, and from what she knew of her late amiable instructress. Being acquainted with the impetuosity of her brother's disposition, she did not doubt but they would soon follow the letter, especially as he had not even requested an answer, but signified his intention of being in town very shortly.

 MODERN FRIENDSHIP.

IN the morning, when Lady Beaumont was informed her son was up, she sent him his uncle's letter; he soon returned with it in his hand; "I congratulate you, madam, on the acquisition of a companion so desirable as Miss Maybank; I hope her conversation will enliven your parties, and induce you to mix more with the world." Upon my word, (replied her ladyship) I am already sufficiently dissipated; but as the company of my niece may call more young people about me, I hope I shall have more of your company. He, smiling, answered, "No doubt of that, madam;" but he had already made up his mind. His lovely Signora had hinted, that lodgings were extremely inconvenient, that his visits might be taken notice of, and that a small house would be a thousand times preferable to apartments under the same roof with other families. He acknowledged the justice of her remark, and requested she would procure such a house as might be agreeable and convenient to her. Thus commissioned,

missioned, 'tis natural to suppose she lost no time, but presently selected a genteel habitation in Clarges-street; she had communicated this to him the preceding evening, and obtained his permission to secure it: The moment he had perused his uncle's letter, a thought struck him that he had now an excellent pretence to quit his mother, and reside entirely with his charming mistress; and he determined to remove previous to Miss Maybank's arrival. He had not seen the Colonel for two or three days, so much had his new attachment engaged him; he now took a walk to call at his lodgings; not finding him there, he went to White's, and the Thatched-House, and was equally unsuccessful.—Returning from St. James's-street, he recollected he had not lately paid his compliments at Lady Summers's, and though he had lost his violent penchant for the young lady, he thought politeness required he should now and then call at the door: He walked therefore to Grosvenor Street, and on asking whether Lady or Miss Summers was at home, the servant answered, "My lady is at home, Sir, though very much distressed, and unfit to see company." "And Miss Summers, (resumed the Baronet,) I hope she is well?" "O, Lord, Sir, (said the man, shaking his head,) what, don't you know Miss is run'd off with Colonel Minors, and, 'tis believed, gone to Scotland." Sir William was thunder struck: "Gone off with Minors?—Impossible! (said he;) Where is your lady? I wish to see her." The servant went up stairs to his lady, whilst Sir William remained below in the parlour perplexed with a thousand confused thoughts and vain conjectures.—The servant returned, and desired him to walk up into Lady Summers's

Summers's dressing-room. The moment he entered, she burst into tears: "Ah, Sir William, (said she) you have injured me irreparably! Why did you introduce that detested Colonel, who has imposed on my unhappy child, and destroyed my peace for ever." "Is it possible, madam, that what I hear is truth? Has Colonel Minors carried off Miss Summers?"—"Would to Heaven it were false! Yesterday morning a servant came with a card from Miss Raikson's, requesting my grand-daughter's company to dinner: Although such an invitation was unusual, I had no suspicions, and glad of any opportunity to promote an intimacy there, I gave a free assent, and the carriage took her into the city, and left her at Mr. Raikson's; she ordered the servant to fetch her at nine. At the hour appointed I sent the carriage—Judge of the servant's surprise when he was informed Mr. Raikson's family were gone out, that Miss Summers did not stay a quarter of an hour in the house, and that one of the footmen waited upon her to a shop in Cheapside, where she said the carriage was to meet her, and there he left her. My footman, who is a sober intelligent fellow, walked to the shop, and asked if a young lady of her description had purchased any thing there, and left it for him to carry? He was told such a lady was there, and bought some gloves, but took them into the carriage, which came with a gentleman in it to fetch her.—With this heart-rending intelligence my servants returned. Judge what must have been my feelings—I flew to her apartment, and, in her dressing-box, found a scrap of paper with these words only:—

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“ Be not alarmed, my dear madam; ’tis only a trip to Scotland;—in a few days Colonel Minors will have the pleasure of presenting *his wife* to you, in the person of your dutiful

Charlotte Summers.”

For a few minutes (added the old lady weeping,) I was happily insensible of my misfortunes; as soon as I recovered I sent to my son, Lord Summers; but so many hours had elapsed, that he thought a pursuit would be useless. “ O, that wretch, I never liked him; many times have I been on the point of shutting my doors on him, but was restrained from a sense of general politeness and respect to his introducer. O! Sir William, why, why did you bring him here to be the ruin of my poor girl?” Sir William sat immoveable in his chair, till roused by this address; “ forgive me, madam, (said he, starting from his reverie,) scarcely can I credit what I hear, tho’ from an authority so respectable:—and believe me, when I assure your ladyship, I never had the slightest idea of any particular attachment between Minors and Miss Summers; his introduction here was on my part involuntary, he absolutely forced himself upon me; for, notwithstanding I had then a high opinion of the Colonel, I had not the presumption to think myself entitled to introduce any man where I was scarcely acknowledged as a visitor myself; and so far from having any suspicions of his designs, I have been almost ready to quarrel with him for not doing justice to Miss Summers.” “ Ah, (said her ladyship,) his whole conduct has been replete with falsehood and duplicity.—Unhappy girl!—what a

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lot you have you drawn !—Before Sir William could reply, Lord Summers was announced ; he walked into the room, bowed gravely to the Baronet, and seeing his mother in tears ; besought her to be composed ; then, turning to Sir William. “ Are you sir, (said he,) furnished with any intelligence respecting your *friend* and my niece ? ” The word *friend* was spoken with particular emphases. “ No my lord ; I was till this moment entirely a stranger to the Colonel’s attachment ; and I beg you and Lady Summers will do me the justice to believe my concern is equal to my surprise.” “ The girl is ruined ; (cried Lord Summers ;) I have this morning been unquestionably informed, he has been guilty of such glaring improprieties that the corps mean to require his selling out of the guards : his character is infamous ; he has long supported his extravagancies by gambling and duplicity of the meanest kind ; Lord Stormer he has completely ruined ; and report says, Sir William, that you are a pretty considerable sufferer from his *friendly* attentions.” Had a bullet wounded him suddenly, Sir William could scarcely have been more surprised and shocked : he was now convinced the Colonel was a villain, and that he had been an egregious dupe. With much hesitation and confusion he acknowledged to Lord Summers that he had indeed been greatly imposed upon, that he always saw the character of Minors in a favourable point of view, and had placed unlimited confidence in his honor. “ *His honor !* (repeated Lord Summers) he is the most worthless of mankind ; and this wretched girl, whom he has seduced, will soon experience bitter regret and unavailing repentance ; her fortune was the inducement, and he well
knows

knows she is entitled to it on her marriage—a cursed thing (cried he stamping) to have such a fellow brought into the family—but I swear he never shall enter my house, neither will I ever see his worthless wife.” “O! my son, (said the old lady, weeping,) do not be too rash.” “I have sworn it, madam, you must do what you please; it will not be long, I fear, before she will want a comforter, and a protector too, from the very man she has so scandalously eloped with.” Sir William rose to take leave, entreating Lady Summers not to entertain any displeasure against him for the late unfortunate affair, which would ever afford him cause of regret and sorrow; and inwardly cursing the Colonel for making him the tool to carry on his infamous scheme.

When he left the house he had abundant cause for reflection; every doubtful transaction in which he had been sometimes diffident of the Colonel’s honor, appeared in its true light; he recollected what Lord Stormer had said to him, called to mind the various plans adopted for engaging him in play, together with the immense sums he had lost; and, on the whole, entertained no doubt but Minors was an unprincipled fellow.—This last affair with Miss Summers he could not forgive; his pretended dislike of her, and base endeavours to prejudice him against her, were now accounted for: he was like one awakened from a dream. To escape from unpleasant reflections and recover his spirits, he flew to his charming Signora; he found her busily employed preparing for a removal into Clarges-street, and therefore not at leisure to attend to his complaints or dissipate his vexation:—having engaged him to meet her in the even-

ing at her new house, she resumed her employment; and he walked to St. James's-street:—he called in at White's; every one was making observations on Miss Summers's trip to Scotland, which was by this time, the current news of the day:—Some applauded the Colonel's successful manœuvres, others affected to pity the girl; and all applied for information to Sir William, as the Colonel's confidential friend: Sir William could not govern his temper, but bitterly reviling Minors, abruptly quitted the room.—He now saw himself without a single companion, he had circumscribed his acquaintance, and being ever with Minors was only known to his associates, whom he was determined to give up, and, if possible, renounce play for ever.—Alas he never once reflected, that he had lately entered into a new engagement which might prove equally as destructive to his fortune, and injurious to his character with the respectable part of mankind! he now sauntered into the park, where he was accosted by Sir Edward Stanley and Mr. Warner, whom he would have given the world to avoid: “So, so, my young friend, (cried the latter,) you are jockey'd I hear.”—“Jockey'd, sir!”—“Why, your best friend, the Colonel, has run away with your mistress and forty thousand pounds.”—“She was no mistress of mine;” replied the Baronet.—“The town says so, and every body pities Sir William Beaumont for being duped by a false friend and inconstant mistress.” “The town is very impertinent, (answered he in a haughty tone) to concern itself about me, and very much mistaken in its judgment.” “I believe so, (said Sir Edward, in a careless way;) 'tis not likely Sir William should have any seri-

ous attachment whilst he visits in Sackville-street." This was another thunder-stroke, but he parried it off, by observing the world was very apt to be mistaken in its conjectures: for his part, he had no particular affection for the lady in question; and for the Colonel he heartily despised him.—Sir William then took leave, rejoicing in his escape from such keen observers. He returned to dine with his mother, and not doubting but she would soon be acquainted with the elopement, exerted resolution enough to be her first informer. Lady Beaumont was equally surprised and shocked, for although she had observed a very good understanding between Colonel Minors and Miss Summers, she had no idea it would have produced such disagreeable consequences.—“ I am truly sorry for the young lady and her family; (said she) I know they had other views for her; though I believe she did not like the gentleman her friends had chosen:—had *you* seriously addressed her, possibly they might have been inclined to relinquish their first intention;—but, I fear, to avoid Scylla, she has run on Charibdis, for the Colonel is certainly a worthless and contemptible character, I flatter myself, my son, you will now give him up.” This, Sir William assured her of;—and Lady Beaumont lamented that an event which had accomplished so desirable a wish on her side, should be productive of sorrow and vexation to the Summers’ family.

C H A P. XVIII.

VIOLENT ATTACHMENTS SELDOM
PERMANENT.

THE Colonel and his prize proceeded to the land of Hymen with all the expedition a post-chaise and four could make; they were soon united, and never was a pair so truly happy; Miss Summers thought herself blest in the most amiable of men, and had not the smallest doubt but, as their union was indissoluble, her friends would soon be reconciled to the charming Colonel; a matter to him totally indifferent: Secure of her fortune, his pride was only concerned in desiring a reconciliation; and as that might receive some abatement from their behaviour, he was determined never to seek what he could hardly expect they would offer. Forty thousand pounds would set him above soliciting favors from any man; the only drawback on his present felicity was the chance of meeting Sir William Beaumont; but, as in love and war, all advantages are judged to be fair

fair and lawful, he resolved, if he could not avoid him, to meet him with a merry countenance, and term his deceitful proceedings a well concerted frolic. On their arrival in town, the new married pair drove directly to the hotel in Pall-mall, and when a little recovered from their fatigue, Mrs. Minors thought proper to write to her grand-mother and uncle : Lady Summers, though highly grieved and offended, considered the extreme youth and volatility of this rash young creature, and how very incapable she was of conducting herself with any tolerable propriety ; she knew, that if forsaken by her friends, and those interested in giving her good advice, she would too probably fall into improper connections, such as might irreparably injure her morals, and bring disgrace on herself and family : From these considerations she returned, though not a kind answer, yet a civil one, desiring to see her. Not so Lord Summers ; enraged beyond forgiveness, despising Colonel Minors, and entertaining the utmost contempt for his niece's light, indelicate conduct, he tore the letter addressed to him in pieces, and enclosing it in a blank cover, without even an address on the back of it, the servant was ordered to carry it from whence he came.—The messenger from Lady Summers returned first, and Mrs. Minors very readily overlooked the coldness of the letter, as it contained an invitation ; the Colonel affected to be pleased, and they both anticipated a similar answer from Lord Summers ; but how great was their surprise and mortification on receiving only the fragments of their own letter ! Mrs. Minors wept with vexation ; her husband flew into a violent passion, swore most tremendous oaths, threatened

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to cane Lord Summers for his insolence to his adorable Charlotte, and, in short, made such a bustle, that she was compelled to dry up her tears, and endeavour to sooth him: But all this passion was counterfeit. He had reflected, that if Lord Summers was reconciled to him, he would try to procure a handsome settlement for his niece: The rash step she had taken had thrown her wholly into the Colonel's power, and he determined to profit by it, and reserve the greatest part of her fortune to himself. Entirely indifferent therefore to his lordship's displeasure, his first care was to write to Mr. Raikson, and demand his wife's fortune; but of this step she was ignorant, and when she pressed him to accompany her to Grosvenor-street, his answer was, "No, my love, visit there first yourself, and when I am invited, I shall with pleasure accompany you; mean time, whilst you are absent, I will look about for a house."

Mrs. Minors ordered the carriage, and prepared, with some little trepidation, to visit her grand-mother. The Colonel sallied forth with all the consciousness of a man, who by a successful stroke, had acquired fortune and independence. He called in at Brookes's, and was received with vociferous applause and congratulations by some of his old companions, who doubtless hoped to share in the spoil he had so dexteriously obtained.—From thence he crossed the Park, with one or two of his associates, and was on the point of making some enquiries relative to Sir William Beaumont, when, at the opening leading to the Palace, who should suddenly meet them but Sir William and his Bella Signora. Both parties started, but the Colonel, presently recovering his usual confidence, gaily advanced,

advanced, and seizing the Baronet's hand, a Congratulate me; Beaumont, (said he) I am just returned from a trip to Scotland, and have taken your fair insensible off your hands." "Excuse me, Sir, (said the other, withdrawing his hand,) henceforth we are strangers. Your conduct has sufficiently explained itself; and I have no reason to regret giving up your acquaintance, which I do from this moment." Then hastily passing on, he left Minors a little mortified, though he instantly rallied his spirits, and turning to his companions with an affected laugh, "The poor Baronet, (cried he) is devilishly vexed at my good fortune; and to say truth, the loss of forty or fifty thousand pounds is sufficient cause for vexation; but the lady had a right to please herself; and I must have been a cursed fool to have suffered such a prize to slip through my hands." "I think so, indeed, (replied one of his friends;) I wish the same temptation would fall in my way." The Colonel, however, did not wish for a second encounter with Sir William; and therefore walked through the Palace-yard, and then strolled about in search of a house; chance led him to Clarges Street, where a very handsome one was fitting up. Having examined it, he was standing at the door asking questions relative to the price, when a carriage stopped at the house opposite, and the Signora alighted and went in. Surprised and confused, he asked the man he was talking with if that lady resided there? and was informed she had lived there about ten days. This was enough for him; he slightly said he should call again, and retired, blessing his stars that he had luckily seen the lady before he had taken the house; for, with all his effrontery, he had

had no inclination to reside within the notice of Sir William Beaumont.

Mrs. Minors returned from her visit, after having, as she said, supported a three hours lecture: "However, my love, (continued she,) the old lady will be glad to see you, and desires you will meet Mr. Raikson at her house the day after to-morrow." "No, my love, (he replied) I shall beg to be excused; I would not have your family suppose I married you for your fortune; my lawyer shall attend with my instructions to settle that business, and then I will wait on Lady Summers with pleasure." Mrs. Minors, who took this speech literally, saw nothing in it but a compliment to herself, and was highly gratified; she wrote a note to her grandmother, and said, Mr. Anderson, the Colonel's lawyer, would attend at the time appointed, and mentioned her husband's kindness with much self-congratulation.

The following morning they went a house-hunting, and meeting with one handsomely furnished, in Grafton Street, and ready to receive them, they directly agreed for it, and determined to move into it the very next day.

In the mean time, Sir William Beaumont, who felt very much hurt at meeting the Colonel in the Park, requested his Signora not to keep up the least acquaintance with him; she most readily promised, but, in all probability, from that hour conceived the design she afterwards put in practice. She had now a most elegant house superbly furnished; it was taken in her name, and fifteen hundred pounds given for the lease; she had the ordering of all the furniture, plate, &c. and to pay the bills Sir William gave her near four thousand pounds; nor did

did his infatuation stop here; he laid out immense sums in jewels and cloaths; her equipage was superb; and, in short, he put no limits to her expences; all which soon burthened his estate with several annuities; but this he never attended to, whilst it was so easy to raise money and please his beautiful Signora.—He was now never at home till two or three in the morning, sometimes stayed out all night, and if Lady Beaumont asked him any questions relative to his engagements, he answered in a careless vague manner, without affording her the least satisfaction: She was entirely ignorant of his attachment; for although it was much talked of, and the Stanleys and Warners well knew it, no one cared to wound the ears of a parent with intelligence so disagreeable.

Sir Edward Stanley determined to write Sir William a letter, and endeavour, if possible, to awaken him from his dream of sensuality, which must, otherwise, terminate in disgrace and ruin. Alas, he did not consider how much easier it is to avoid follies than recede from them! A relaxation from principle, imperceptibly leads to fatal consequences, and when we are once plunged into error, the recovery is very difficult, and seldom undertaken. The unhappy connection Sir William Beaumont had formed with an artful unprincipled woman was not to be easily broken; every day strengthened her influence over him, and rendered him more her slave. For some time he kept his resolution of avoiding play, but falling in accidentally, one morning, with two of the gentlemen he had frequently met at Brookes's; he was tempted to accompany them to a billiard-table; he had a very slender knowledge of the game, but hap-
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pening to win, he soon grew distractedly fond of it, and determined to pursue the amusement with all that thoughtless eagerness which marked his character.

The Colonel and his lady were now settled in their new house, and cards were dispatched to all their acquaintance: love and harmony appeared to have taken up their residence with them, and, for a few days, they were inexpressibly happy—the time appointed for meeting Mr. Raikson had been delayed by the Colonel's lawyer not being in town, and till that business was settled the Colonel had declined visiting Lady Summers, though Mrs. Minors had called on her two or three times: in about a week the day was fixed, and notwithstanding Mr. Raikson thought it extremely odd the Colonel did not chuse to be present; he consented to meet Mr. Anderson as his representative, and brought his own lawyer along with him. They met very amicably.—Mr. Raikson produced his accounts, and it was found that by his integrity and attention he had encreased the original sum of forty thousand pounds to very near fifty: Lady Summers made him the warmest acknowledgements for his noble and disinterested conduct, and secretly lamented the fortune had not remained under his care a few years longer, or that her son had more prudently restricted his daughter from the possession of it until she had attained the age of twenty-one; however, as regret was unavailing, she was silent on that head, and attended to the gentlemen. Mr. Raikson spoke first: “The lady's fortune, I presume, sir, exceeds your client's expectations; did you come prepared to make any offer of settlement,

tlement, or to abide by what her friends shall judge equitable?"—"Sir, (returned Mr. Anderson) my instructions are very concise; let the lady's fortune be what it may, the Colonel proposes to settle ten thousand pounds upon her and her children, and reserves the remainder for their mutual advantage." Astonishment seized the whole company; at last, "ten thousand pounds, sir, cried Mr. Raikson, you mistake surely; I should suppose he rather means to reserve ten thousand pounds to himself in case the lady dies; for what has he to offer as a settlement or an equivalent for her fortune?" "I did not come here, sir, (replied Mr. Anderson,) to enter into any altercations; neither am I prepared to dispute with you on the subject—what I have to say is simple this, Colonel Minors will settle ten thousand pounds out of his lady's fortune, (which is now become his,) on her and her children:—you well know, sir, he can claim the whole: if this proposal is accepted I am prepared to execute the deeds; if not, the Colonel will pursue what other measures he shall judge proper. The money is his property, and you cannot withhold it." It would be difficult to describe the grief and vexation of Lady Summers at such an evident proof of the Colonel's baseness and avarice.—"Wretched undone girl! (cried she in the bitterness of her heart;) now indeed will repentance overtake thee! O, sir, (addressing Mr. Raikson) what is to be done?" "At present nothing can be done; (he replied;) but however reluctantly I may enter upon the task, I will see Colonel Minors, and talk to him. I am sorry to give these gentlemen

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the trouble of another meeting, but 'tis not to be avoided."

The lawyers took leave, and left Mr. Raikson with Lady Summers—Mr. Anderson returned and related what had past to the Colonel.—“ Let Raikson come when he will, I am prepared : (said he ;) not a tittle will I recede from in my demands.”—In short, there were two or three meetings ; the Colonel was obstinate, nor was there any means to bring him into better terms. Mrs. Minors, by the very imprudent step she had taken in going to Scotland, had thrown herself absolutely into his power, and the unfortunate clause in her father’s will, which gave her possession of her fortune on the day of marriage, had invested the Colonel with the privilege of disposing of it as his generosity might prompt ; and how far that could be depended on, has been seen. The guardians were compelled to accede to his proposals, and ten thousand pounds only remained secure to his wife and children ; the rest was given up to his discretion. Lady Summers, though sufficiently exasperated against Minors, avoided saying much on the subject to his wife ; the particulars, indeed, could not be concealed from her ; but she forbore reflecting on him, and contented herself with endeavouring to persuade Mrs. Minors to such a regularity and decorum in her behaviour as might claim his respect and ensure his affection. A very short time put a period to his violent affection for his bride ; possessed of her fortune, his attentions gradually relaxed—he was absent from her almost all day, and his evenings were spent in amusements in which she had no share :—at first she was hurt and mortified,
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shed tears in abundance and complained of his want of attention to her; but as she had now many visitors of both sexes, and as he had not attempted to restrain her expences, but gave freely what money she required; she soon fell into the fashionable modes of diverting her chagrin and killing time; and, within a month after their marriage, they were as fashionably careless to each other, and as much attached to separate amusements as if they had been united for seven years; such are the natural consequences of clandestine marriages!

CHAP.

C H A P. XIX.

WHAT A YOUNG WOMAN SHOULD BE.

LADY Beaumont now hourly expected her brother; and her anxiety to see her niece, that she might be enabled to judge if she was likely to prove an amiable companion, was accompanied with many painful sensations: the charge she was to undertake was a sacred one; the care of a young lady of family and fortune was an arduous task; and when the servant announced Lord Maybank's arrival; she trembled so excessively that she could hardly stand. It was now twenty years since she had seen her brother, and notwithstanding there was little similarity of disposition, and not much affection between them, yet when he advanced to embrace her, a thousand soft emotions took place in her bosom, and in returning his embrace she burst into a flood of tears. His inflexibility seemed to give way, and with a tenderness of voice not common, he said, presenting his daughter; "This, my

my dear sister, is my Louisa, my only child; henceforth let her become yours; I cannot place her in better hands."—"From this moment, I consider her as such, (returned Lady Beaumont, clasping her in her arms;) and my heart tells me, I shall not repent the adoption." "Neither shall I, dear madam, I am well assured;" said the young Lady, gracefully kissing her aunt's hand: after many reciprocal endearments, Lord Maybank enquired for his nephew: "I expect him every moment, replied her ladyship, he has within these few days, left my house as an inmate; for, as a young man in the habits of seeing much gay company, there would have been an impropriety in his residing under the same roof with my niece." "I am much concerned, said Lord Maybank, that we have been the cause of depriving you of your son's company."—"Indeed, replied her ladyship, you have no cause for regret: I am persuaded the same event would very soon have taken place, and that he gladly laid hold of this plea to live more to himself, and be free from observing that attention to hours and company I could not dispense with."—At the time of this introduction Miss Maybank was just turned of eighteen, her person of a middling height, rather slender than otherwise, her complexion a clear brown, which some people might call fair, her hair light, her eyes blue, and very expressive; her features, though not exactly regular, yet such as suited the whole turn of her face, which beamed with sweetness and modest cheerfulness—nor was the intelligence it conveyed a false index of her mind.

Lady Maybank had been a very accomplished woman, the little domestic happiness she enjoyed with

with her husband, and the solitary life she led in her castle, left her no amusement but the education of her daughter; and her ideas on this point were perhaps a little singular; she endeavoured to improve her morals, and give her the justest sentiments of virtue and goodness before she taught her any accomplishments—she knew *this* must be the ground-work for her future happiness; and when her sweetness of temper, her love of truth, her humanity and admiration of every virtue, appeared, in a thousand little instances, to be confirmed; Lady Maybank then thought it necessary to cultivate her genius—with some difficulty she procured, for three months, a tolerable dancing-master; in music she instructed her daughter herself, and likewise in the French language, drawing, geography and history. “My dear Louisa, said Lady Maybank, I wish you to dance *well*, but not *excellently*; the one is a necessary accomplishment for every gentlewoman; the other, by producing universal admiration, is too apt to make girls bold and confident. Extreme excellence in music is liable to yet stronger objections; to attain it, almost every other accomplishment must be neglected; and, when attained, it leads to an improper degree of intimacy with professional people. Music softens the mind—and if a master and his pupil are continually together, bad consequence may ensue: nevertheless, I would have you know and *love* music; but I would not have you *doat* upon it. There is one accomplishment that may be pursued to the utmost without any danger, I mean the art of drawing, which often cheers the solitary hour, and, by fully engrossing the mind, may sometimes prove an antidote to sorrow. A know-
ledge

ledge of modern languages, history, geography and the belle-lettres, is likewise highly proper and even requisite." Such were Lady Maybank's sentiments on education: her daughter religiously followed the instructions of this wise parent, and soon became one of the best informed, as well as one of the most amiable young women of the age: she respected her father, but she adored her mother; and when bereaved by death of this revered instructress, companion and friend, she had nearly sunk under the calamity; religion, however, checked the excess of her grief; and time, that sovereign balsam for our sorrows, at length converted it into a tender melancholy.

The first dawn of pleasure she received was from the idea of being taken to England; her father's conduct could not obtain her approbation, though she never presumed to censure it: of Lady Beaumont, her mother had always spoken in the highest terms; it was therefore with a delight she could not conceal that she prepared to accompany her father, although uncertain what might be her reception.

A few hours after their arrival in town, Sir William came in to visit his mother, and having expected his uncle, was not surprised at being introduced to him. His lordship was evidently much struck with his nephew's figure, and breathed a secret hope that a union might take place between him and his daughter; the young lady also thought him the most pleasing man she had ever seen, and wished that his mental accomplishments might be equal to his exterior recommendation. Sir William thought Miss Maybank handsome, but her beauty was not of the striking kind; it stole upon him impercepti-

bly, and she must be known to be admired as she deserved. She had not the brilliancy of his Signora; her charms were more insinuating than captivating, and therefore made little impression on Sir William Beaumont. He could not, however, with any decency, go away, but was constrained to pass, what he thought, a very hum-drum evening with this family party, and rejoiced was he when at eleven o'clock Lady Beaumont proposed retiring: He rose with alacrity to take leave, and was not a little mortified to find he was expected to attend his uncle about town the next day; obliged to comply, he endeavoured to assume a cheerfulness foreign to his heart, and promised to be with them at their breakfast table.

When he had left them, Lord Maybank was lavish in his praise; he said, he was proud of his nephew, that he had the air of a man of fashion. "But how the devil could you contrive to make him so clever in the country?" continued he, for I apprehend this is the first time of his seeing London." "Indeed, answered Lady Beaumont, I take no merit to myself respecting his acquirements; the few weeks he has been in town have entirely altered him, and I cannot think for the better; though, perhaps, the modish part of the world may judge otherwise."—"Doubtless they do; (replied he,) you and Lady Maybank would have men as good as yourselves; but she never could succeed in her designs upon me; and I am glad to see my nephew has got rid of the rusticity of a country education." No reply being made by Lady Beaumont, they retired to their apartments; her ladyship accompanied Miss Maybank, and took

took a most affectionate leave of her for the night.

CHAP. XX.

AN ARTFUL WOMAN.

SIR William, highly rejoiced at his escape from such insipid company, flew to his Signora on the wings of love; he found her as she said, under the most painful uneasiness, it being the first night that her dear Beaumont had absented himself from supper during his residence with her: She was terrified lest any accident had happened to him. He soon acquitted himself of any neglect, and accounted for his absence. No sooner had he mentioned his cousin than she took the alarm. “ Ah, said she, rubbing her eyes with her handkerchief, I see what will become of me; this young lady is brought over for your wife; *my* fondness for you will be

quickly tiresome, and all *your* vows of love to me forgotten." There is no doubt, he said, every thing a fond infatuated lover could express; he renewed all his promises to her, and ridiculed Miss Maybank, whom he called a raw Scotch girl; and, in short, by protestations and presents, he succeeded in calming her grief, and reconciling her to his attendance on his uncle for a few days to come.

Let us now return to Colonel and Mrs. Minors; he already began to find fault with her expences, and though, by the little attention he paid to her, and by his own extravagant mode of living, he encouraged her in dissipation, yet he was by no means pleased at the avidity with which she pursued it. Abroad they appeared the fondest couple in the world; but, at home, mutual upbraidings and contempt took place of violent fondness, and they agreed in nothing but their love of pleasure, and their desire of separating. Mrs. Minors began to look back with regret on her past folly, in throwing herself and fortune into the power of a worthless man; she had precluded all possibility of appeal or complaint to her friends, from whom she could expect only reproach and reflections; intimates she had none; those fashionable people with whom she was in the habits of living, would only have ridiculed her uneasiness; and the only persons in the world from whom she could have expected comfort or advice Miss Thornhill and Miss Raiksons, she had most shamefully neglected. Her uncle had never yet condescended to receive her, and from her grandmother, what consolation had she a right to expect?—Thus, unhappy, deserted, and unable to bear her own reflections, she fled to company

as her only resource. A young beautiful woman of vivacity and spirit was naturally an object of general observation; she had soon a croud of gentlemen about her; and one in particular, Lord Delmot, was entirely her shadow. The Colonel, too much engrossed by his own pleasures to attend to the conduct of his wife any otherwise than by restraining her expences, felt neither uneasiness nor displeasure at this circumstance; and thus left to follow her own inclinations, without an object to interest her affections, or a friendly monitor to direct her steps, she launched into every folly which fashion and dissipation could devise.

Poor Lady Summers saw, with much affliction, the progress of levity and folly in a young creature, whom she had looked up to as the soother of her declining years.—The good natured world did not fail to exaggerate and blazon forth those errors they helped to confirm; and averse as Lord Summers was to interfere in their concerns, pride brought him one morning to his mother's dressing-room, apparently much agitated and displeased. Throwing himself into a chair, "I foresaw, said he, what would be the event of this cursed marriage. The fellow is squandering away every shilling of my niece's money in gaming and opera dancers, whilst she is flirting with every fellow in town, has already lost her reputation, and will soon, I doubt not, forfeit her honor, if some steps are not taken to stop her career." "Heaven forbid! (said Lady Summers;) but surely the only way to prevent such a dreadful event, will be for her relations to countenance her, and draw her into different connections." "You must exert yourself then, madam, replied he; I neither

I neither can nor will interfere: Her whole conduct is the natural consequence of a wrong education; of sending her in a high style to a boarding school, where she was taught to consider herself of great consequence, indulged in expences superior to her companions, and where she learnt nothing, because her teachers found it their interest to oblige her; and thus, a few superficial accomplishments, very ill understood, and a great share of volatility never restrained, have thrown her into the power of a worthless fellow, a disgrace to his corps, who married her evidently for her fortune, has meanly taken the advantage of her imprudence to cheat her, and is now, by his dissipations, in the high road to ruin.”—“ It avails little to recriminate, or condemn what is past, said Lady Summers; all we have now to do is to prevent the evil consequences you are apprehensive of; I will see her, and talk to her; I hope I have some influence left; she is good-humoured and affectionate, and, on those qualities, I build my expectations of a reformation in her conduct.” Lord Summers shook his head, with an air of incredulity. “ I wish you may not be deceived, madam; but tell her from me, if she thus goes on in a thoughtless career of pleasure, and renders her name infamous, by H—ns, I shall take some desperate steps to prevent her infamy from extending to her relations.”

When her son quitted her, Lady Summers wrote a note to Mrs. Minors, earnestly requesting to see her in Grosvenor Street the following morning. The evening of this very day, Colonel Minors, with some of his associates, went to the opera for half an hour's lounge; there in a box (which Sir William Beaumont had procured for her)

her) sat the Signora in all the splendour which fine cloaths and jewels could create, accompanied by a lady who was her usual attendant in public; the Colonel soon recognised her, and captivated by her appearance, hastily repaired to her box, and finding himself very well received, entered into a long conversation: Artful wicked people soon understand one another; she explained her situation with the Baronet, and boasted of her success in having, by artful management, secured an annuity of six hundred pounds a year for life, besides her jewels, furniture, &c. She warmly congratulated Minors on his marriage, enquiring after his pretty run-a-way lady. He made no scruple of confiding his past and future projects to her, complained of the immense sums he had lost and spent, and hinted a great inclination to quit his wife and England both together. The Signora having no design in her head to execute, nor any present intrigue on her hands, (Sir William being so much engaged, that she never saw him till midnight) began to pay great attention to the Colonel; and having invited him to dine with her the following day, they separated with a mutual good understanding between them; the intercourse was kept up, and a plan formed, which was executed in a short time afterwards.

AN EVENT NEITHER SURPRISING NOR
UNNATURAL.

LORD Maybank having gratified his natural curiosity by visiting the public places, which, after twenty years residence in the country, were all new to him, prepared to return to his castle and favorite dulcinea; Sir William proposed to accompany him the first day's journey, and having acquainted his faithful Signora he should be absent from her one night, had some difficulty to dry her tears, and enable her to bear the dreadful idea of such a long absence as two days! Miss Maybank, whose truly affectionate heart felt hurt at this first separation from her father, notwithstanding she knew but too well the disgraceful connection he meant to persevere in, parted from him with a flood of tears. He made her a handsome present for immediate expences, and settled her allowance at four hundred pounds a year:—He then took an affectionate leave of his sister, who sighed to think, that in all probability she should see him
him

him no more ; and set off in good health and spirits for his return to Scotland.

Lady Beaumont, to divert the grief of her niece, ordered the carriage, and drove into the city, for the purpose of introducing her to Miss Thornhill ; this young lady was at home, and received them with that grace and respectful attention which at once delighted and engaged the esteem of Miss Maybank.

Mr. Thornhill being informed of the ladies' visit, soon made his appearance, and after some chat on different subjects, told Lady Beaumont, smiling, she would soon be enabled to congratulate him on a double marriage in his family. " I rejoice to hear it, answered she, for I am sure the parties must be worthy ; have I the liberty to enquire who they are ? By the conscious looks of my sweet friend here, I presume she is one." She is, indeed, replied Mr. Thornhill. My sister, in the course of next week, if the lawyers do their duty, gives her hand to Mr. Hargrave, a gentleman whose large fortune and agreeable person are his least recommendations ; and my near relation, Sir James Godfrey, is at the same time to be united to the amiable Miss Raikson, whom your ladyship saw on your last visit here.—If goodness of heart, and purity of sentiments, with excellent understandings and agreeable persons, can ensure happiness, I think my friends have more than a chance for enjoying it." " And I do assure you, said Lady Beaumont, no one of your friends is more warmly interested in such an event than myself." She took Miss Thornhill's hand, who appeared a little confused at her brother's unexpected communication, " Look up, my dear young lady ; nor feel abashed at bestowing your heart

and hand on a worthy man; receive the congratulations of your friends with that confidence a laudable choice must inspire; and may you taste that real felicity which attends a connexion formed on the basis of virtue and goodness." Miss Thornhill modestly expressed her thanks, and hopes of being admitted among the number of Miss Maybank's friends; a compliment that young lady received with much pleasure.

The following evening Sir William returned, and after acquainting the ladies he had left his uncle in perfect health, complained of fatigue and retired to his house, impatient to see his charming Signora; having knocked pretty smartly twice, the door was opened by a woman who had been house-maid from the time the house was first taken.—“Where is your mistress?” demanded he impatiently, as he went through the hall.—“Lord, sir, I don't know—I thought she was with you—she went out of town yesterday evening”—“Out of town! replied he, starting back; where?—With whom?”—“Why, sir, with the Colonel and Mrs. Henley.”—“Colonel!—what Colonel?”—“Colonel Minors, sir;—Mrs. Henley told me they were going to meet you and should return to night.” Astonishment seized all his faculties; and for a time suspended the power of enquiry; when a little recovered he asked a hundred questions, and at last gathered, that the Colonel used to come to the house every day, that Mrs. Henley had carried several trunks away, and that the preceding afternoon the Colonel came in and asked the Signora before her servants, if she would like a ride, to meet Sir William. Being answered in the affirmative, he and the lady went in one post-chaise, and Mrs. Henley and her maid in another,

ther, taking with them a great many bundles. The Signora told her own coachman and footman they would not be wanted for two days, so, of course, they were both gone out. The servant might have talked on for hours; Sir William sat like one transfixed in the chair he had thrown himself into; but, when she ceased speaking, he started up, and flying to the dressing-room found every trunk gone, the drawers open and empty, and the cabinet in which his Signora deposited her jewels and money, completely rifled:—He next proceeded to the dining-parlour and opening the plate closet beheld empty shelves; he had given her money to pay for every thing ordered into the house, and she had taken care to have all the plate and linen marked with her name, therefore he had no redress, even supposing he could find her: to convey an idea of his surprise and madness would be a vain attempt—that the woman who apparently doated on him, who had shed a torrent of tears at parting with him for one night, should have thus basely deceived and robbed him, appeared incredible; but that the Colonel, so lately married, possessed of so large a fortune, and whom she had expressed a very great dislike to, that he should be an accomplice was the most astonishing of all things.—In short, the more he reflected the greater was his rage and embarrassment; and when the men-servants returned home, they found him walking up and down the house like a madman; neither was it without difficulty that they could get him to bed: when his own man came into his dressing-room at the usual hour in the morning, he heard an odd noise, and knocking at his door, asked if he chose to be dressed, or have his coffee in bed?

—no

—no answer being made, he opened the door, and saw his master sitting up in his bed, panting for breath and apparently very ill: the man, excessively frightened, spoke to him, but he neither answered nor looked at him: the servant rang the bell with violence, and the maids running up, he ordered one to fly for a doctor, and another to acquaint Lady Beaumont of her son's sudden illness. A little capalaire and water was now forced down Sir William's throat, but still he spoke not, nor appeared to know any body.

A physician and a surgeon soon arrived, and, having been let blood, he recovered breath and looked from one object to another, but without any seeming recollection. Lady Beaumont now came, and on seeing her son in a situation so deplorable, she burst into tears, and taking his burning hand, exclaimed; "My dear William do you not know me? speak, for heaven's sake!" After gazing attentively at her, he pressed her hand, and attempted to move his lips, but could not utter a word. Doctor W. requested her ladyship to be composed; he told her, from Sir William's situation, and the intelligence he had gained from the servants, his disorder appeared to him owing to some violent agitation of mind, which would, he hoped, subside in a few hours, with quiet and proper medicines; and he would pay another visit in the evening. A perfect stranger to any cause which could have occasioned a disorder so sudden and violent, Lady Beaumont was dying with curiosity; and as her son appeared to dose a little, she left his bedside for a moment, telling his servant to call her if necessary, and going into the drawing-room ordered the house-keeper to be called—"madam, answered the maid, the house-keeper was

was Mrs. Henley, and she is gone with my mistress." "Mistress! repeated her ladyship; what mistress? whom do you mean?"—the servant then, with all the consequence of one trusted with an important secret, acquainted her ladyship with every particular already related—never was astonishment equal to Lady Beaumont's—entirely a stranger to the connection, she had never entertained any idea of Sir William's having a mistress in the house with him, much less could she have believed it possible that Colonel Minors, so lately married to a beautiful young lady, could desert her for an abandoned woman.—Alas, she knew but little of the depravity of mankind, and of the frequent instances where the amiable virtuous wife is, for a time at least, sacrificed to the most worthless and unprincipled of her sex!—But in the case of Colonel Minors the injury was aggravated by the blackest ingratitude, because the unsuspecting thoughtless Mrs. Minors, by his persuasions, had thrown herself and her fortune wholly in his power, and submitted her happiness and future provision to his generosity—The servant likewise informed Lady Beaumont of the plate and linen being all carried off.

Shocked as she was at this intelligence, she could easily conceive the natural impetuosity of her son's disposition, was inflamed by such horrid perfidy and deceit; but as most violent passions soon subside, she flattered herself a few hours rest might compose and restore him, and if so, she could scarcely feel any concern for an event which had freed him from such a disgraceful connection. Poor lady! she knew not how far the evil had extended, nor by what swift gradations a man drawn into error plunges into a whirl-

a whirl-pool of vice and misery ! She returned to his room—he was still asleep, and though he had frequent startings, yet he breathed more freely, and his fever seemed to abate ; in about two hours he awaked perfectly in his senses ; opening his eyes he beheld his mother hanging over him with tender anxiety : “ Ah, madam, are you here ? ” he faintly cried—“ yes, my dear William, and rejoiced to find you better.”—“ The cause of my illness I blush to acknowledge.”—“ Say no more, my dear son ; I know all, and I trust the ingratitude and deceit you have met with will guard you against future errors and impositions.”—“ It must, it shall ! he eagerly exclaimed. May I but live to meet that villain ! ”—“ And to what purpose should you wish to meet him ? said Lady Beaumont. Would you stake a life so valuable to your mother, and which, I hope, may hereafter be useful to your fellow creatures, would you risque such a life for an unprofitable revenge on an abandoned unprincipled villain ? Think better my son, and let his crimes be his punishment.—Poor wretch ! when the fruits of his villainy are wasted away, when old age precludes his present enjoyments, where will be his recourse from shame and bitter self-reproach !—Oh my dear William, you cannot wish a severer revenge than a long life to an abandoned villain like him.”—“ What ! cried he eagerly, shall I sit tamely by, and let him enjoy the fruits of his treachery ? ”—“ And are you, my son, free from blame ? replied Lady Beaumont. Could he have been guilty of this treachery had not your follies (to call them nothing worse) given him the opportunity ? a man should be free from errors himself before he presumes to censure
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sure the crimes of others, much less take upon him to chastise them.—But no more on this subject :—thank God, you are much better, and will soon, I trust, be restored to health, and what is still more desirable, to a sense of your past errors.”

Sir William was silent, and absorbed in reflection ; his mind was still much agitated, tho’ not with that violence which had occasioned a temporary suspension of all his faculties :—his fever abated, and when doctor W. repeated his visit, he found him so much amended as to be entirely out of danger ; indeed rest and composure alone, seemed wanting to re-establish his health.

When Lady Beaumont’s fears for her son began to abate, she reflected with much compassion on the situation of Mrs. Minors ; and, the following morning, when from a good night’s rest he appeared very much amended, she ordered her carriage and drove to Lady Summer’s.—She found her at home, without any particular appearance of concern, and felt a reluctance to communicate unpleasant intelligence ; after some indifferent chat, she enquired after Mrs. Minors ; “ I believe she is well, returned her ladyship, sighing ; I have not seen her these two days, and intended calling in Grafton-street to-day ; though I am not a welcome visitor : that ungenerous man, her husband, being in possession of her fortune, neglects her person and is careless of—her conduct ; she is young, thoughtless and generally admired, and I tremble for the consequences.

Lady Beaumont, after a few observations applicable to her subject, at last opened the business of her visit ; and supposing Mrs. Minors, from

from a sense of her misconduct, incapable of applying to her friends under her present distress, proposed to Lady Summers to go with her and call upon her. Lady Summers accepted the offer, and, as Lady Beaumont's carriage waited, they got into it and drove to Mrs. Minors's. The servant, when he opened the door, appeared rather embarrassed, and confessed, his lady had desired to be denied to all visitors; however, Lady Summers said, she knew the order could not extend to her, in consequence of which they got out, and sending for Mrs. Minors's woman, learned from her, that her lady had been very much afflicted by the Colonel's absence and a letter he had sent her; and that Lord Delmot had called three times but had not been admitted. Pleased with this information, the old ladies sent up their names:—after some little time the maid returned, and ushered them up stairs—they found Mrs. Minors in her dressing-room, her eyes red with weeping, and her dress totally neglected:—she rose at their entrance, and bursting into tears, took her grandmother's hand, and kissing it, exclaimed; “Ah, madam, your poor girl is sufficiently punished for her disobedience and folly!”—then turning to Lady Beaumont, “you are very good, madam, (continued she,) to support my dear parent under the affliction which my imprudence has brought upon her.” “From this hour, my dear Charlotte, (said Lady Summers, embracing her,) your errors are forgotten:—you have still a friend who will never desert you.” This kindness, so unlooked for, deeply affected Mrs. Minors, who, though gay and dissipated, did not want sensibility: after being a little recovered, she said, “I see you are both acquainted with
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the cruel treatment I have met with: here is the letter I received the night before last, on my return from a rout in high spirits and foolish exultation at my own consequence. Lady Summers took the letter and read it aloud.

FROM COLONEL MINORS TO MRS. MINORS.

“ Before this letter reaches you, I shall be far on my way to Italy, accompanied by a lady who has done me the honor to be my companion and friend. My own property I have secured for my use abroad, where probably I shall stay some years—your ten thousand pounds is incompetent to maintain you in the style you now live in: but perhaps your relations may receive you again. I wish you health and happiness; and shall always remember, that to your kindness I am indebted for my present felicity.

JOHN MINORS.”

“ Judge, said Mrs. Minors, what I must have felt on perusing that letter: a single moment was sufficient to make me sensible of my folly and imprudence. When Colonel Minors was first introduced to me I thought but little of him; I will confess, I preferred Sir William Beaumont; yet, the Colonel’s attentions flattered my vanity; insensibly I began to like him, and as Sir William Beaumont made no particular addresses, and Minors assured me, had other engagements, I grew careless to him and more attached to his companion; my grand-mother, I saw, was not much pleased with his visits, and my uncle openly expressed his dislike to him; I found, therefore, there was no probability of their consent; and from a foolish opposition to the sentiments of my friends, and a violent dislike to another gentleman who was proposed to me, I admitted the Colonel’s addresses, and he gained my whole heart; to my shame I own, little persuasion was necessary to induce me to go off with him; nor when married and returned to town, did I feel much regret at the loss of my uncle’s affection:—the circumstance of the settlement gave me at first some little pain, but the Colonel told me his apparent interested views were only to vex my uncle, and that he had given his lawyer orders to draw a deed of gift in my favor for twenty thousand pounds more;—this, I believed, and troubled myself no further on the subject: but he soon began to cool in his attentions to me, and was never at home; at first I fretted a good deal, but I had no body to complain to, nor any redress to expect if I had complained; I was obliged, therefore, to fly to company as a remedy against vexation. The admiration
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real, or pretended, which I met with, enabled me to bear his slights with indifference; and whilst I was entertained, flattered and praised by others I grew careless as to the nature of his engagements: but this letter has opened my eyes; to be entirely deserted for another woman, to be deprived of all my fortune and reduced from opulence to a very trifling comparative sum, to be obliged to give up my acquaintance and become the talk of the town; such circumstances were enough to awaken reflection!—two nights and a whole day without rest or comfort, have shewn me all my follies in their true light; and although I have been imprudent and am become poor, yet, if my dear grandmother will condescend to receive me and shield me from the anger and reproaches of my uncle, I will endeavour to atone for my past errors as much as possible by the regularity of my conduct in future.” “Yes, my dear child, said the old lady, embracing and weeping over her, yes, into my house, into my arms you shall be received; and may your present punishment be all you will ever experience for your indiscretion!—but you are not the only sufferer—poor Sir William Beaumont has been cruelly used.”

The whole affair was then related to her and she felt indignation and contempt for the unworthy man for whose sake she had deserted her friends and violated delicacy and decorum, an error she declared she should never cease to deplore. It was then determined to dispose of the furniture and discharge the servants as soon as possible; and that Mrs. Minors should accompany Lady Summers to her country-seat for a few months, till the whole matter was forgotten, and till she could be reconciled

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to appear in public, a thing she now dreaded beyond all others—her ladyship said she would have every thing in the house valued, and when sold the money deposited in a banker's hands to prevent any altercation with Minors hereafter, or any claim upon his wife. Lady Beaumont having stayed some time took leave of Mrs. Minors in an affectionate manner, and leaving Lady Summers with her, returned to her son, lamenting that a young and amiable woman who might have made a worthy man happy, should, by one imprudent step, have involved herself in sorrow and unavailing regret, and be lost to society in the character of a respectable wife and mother.

On return to her son's, she found him up and much better; and feeling for her niece, who had been so many hours, indeed a day and a night alone; she hastened to her own house, where she was quite rejoiced to find Lady Stanley sitting at work with Miss Maybank: as she had repeatedly sent word to her niece respecting the progress of her son's disorder, both ladies arose and warmly congratulated her on Sir William's convalescence. "How infinitely am I obliged to you, my dear Lady Stanley, (said Lady Beaumont,) for giving up your time to my niece! I little hoped to have found her so happily situated." "The obligation, (answered Lady Stanley,) is on my side: I called here yesterday morning, and was much alarmed at hearing you had been sent for on so disagreeable an occasion; I would have persuaded Miss Maybank to accompany me home, but as she declined doing me that favor from the uncertainty of your situation, I did not chuse to leave her alone, and having spent best part of the day
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with her and heard Sir William's disorder had taken a favorable turn, I returned home to sleep, but hurried away this morning to your charming niece; and I congratulate you, my dear Lady Beaumont, on possessing such a treasure."—Her ladyship replied in the politest manner to the compliment, and then naturally fell into a detail of all that had happened. "Except the catastrophe, (said Lady Stanley,) I am no stranger to the whole affair; but 'tis such an unpleasant office to communicate disagreeable intelligence that neither Sir Edward nor myself chose to mention what was very generally talked of: but, added she, I fear Sir William will be a very great sufferer in his fortune." "Not any thing very considerable, (replied Lady Beaumont;) a few hundreds I suppose by the plate and linen that Signora has taken with her." Lady Stanley said no more, although she had been much better informed; but requested her ladyship's permission for Miss Maybank to spend a few days with her during her attendance on her son; which desire was readily complied with and her ladyship promised to dine with them the following day if Sir William's situation permitted her absence.

Having seen her niece safe under Lady Stanley's protection she returned to Sir William and found him very considerably amended in health, but extremely low in spirits. The truth was, that being confined to his room alone, and weak in body, he had reflected on the state of his affairs, and the strange infatuation of his mind for some weeks past; he found when all his debts were paid his estate would be little more than *one* thousand a year out of *five*; and all

all his ready money was gone;—he knew that his mother could not long remain a stranger to his excesses, and was sensible how much the knowledge would cost her:—he execrated the Colonel and cursed the Signora; but that availed nothing. After many different plans designed and as often laid aside, he determined to send for Mr. Thornhill the next day, to open his whole heart to him and entreat his advice in what manner to act.—Happy had it been for him had he always determined so wisely! Lady Beaumont rejoiced to find him so well recovered, endeavoured to amuse him and raise his spirits; whilst she was so employed, a servant entered and delivered a letter which he had no sooner read than a violent exclamation excited Lady Beaumont's curiosity: “Does it come from either of your quondam friends?” demanded she. “O, madam, (replied Sir William,) how shall I confess my folly, my imprudence! when I took this house for the abandoned woman who has deserted me, the lease was fifteen hundred pounds; the writings were drawn and mutually signed, and I gave her the money to carry the following day and receive the counter part of the lease; she told me she had done so, and I believed it; this letter comes from the attorney, desiring me to appoint a day when he may wait upon me with the lease and receive the money.—What a horrid deceitful woman, and what an egregious dupe I have been!”—“Tis really a painful affair, (said Lady Beaumont,) and I heartily wish this may be the only deception. You had best let your servant make proper enquiries among the trades-people.” Much vexed and mortified, he acceded to the proposal, and the servant was accordingly sent round: on his return he brought word there were bills due at every

every house, and the amount would be sent in the following day—in fine the next day brought in bills for upwards of two thousand pounds, besides jewellers' and silversmiths' bills for near four thousand more; all which debts he had given the lady money to discharge; but as he went with her to order most of the things, and could produce no receipts, he was sensible he had no redress;—however unhappy all this made Lady Beaumont, she forbore reproaches, because she saw her son deeply afflicted. “As you have about seven thousand pounds in the hands of Mr. Thornhill, (said she,) you had better draw on him in order to settle these demands, than sell out of the bank.” This last observation made him tremble; but recovering himself; “I will send and request the favor of Mr. Thornhill's company, he replied; and consult him on the state of my affairs.”—“Do so, (said her ladyship;) and if I may be permitted to advise, dispose of this house, and either return to me or take a handsome set of apartments without encumbering yourself with house-keeping 'till you are married. Bachelors are always liable to great impositions from every body.”

The following day Sir William found very little remains of his illness, except a languor, which arose from inquietude of mind; he still persevered in his resolution of mentioning the state of his affairs to Mr. Thornhill, without the least reserve, and when that gentleman called on him agreeable to his request, the whole was laid before him. Mr. Thornhill could scarcely believe that such immense sums should have been dissipated in so short a period of time, but entered into the business with a friendly zeal; he

he proposed to Sir William to discharge all his debts with the trades-people immediately, and added that he would advance money to clear the estate and pay off the sums for which the annuities were granted; that he would take all the remaining debts on himself, receiving only common interest for the money he advanced, which would be near a thousand a year in the Baronet's pocket, such exorbitant interest had he agreed to pay, and if Sir William would appropriate that saving to paying off the mortgage, a few years would clear the estate.—These very friendly proposals were accepted with joy.—“Not only the thousand a year you will save for me, (replied Sir William, but six hundred pounds more shall be employed in discharging my debts—I will live on the remaining four hundred pounds.—Perhaps I may go abroad in search of Lord Stormer: our situations are similar, and I am convinced he has found the necessity of reformation as well as myself: we both owe our ruin to the same cause.” “Your resolution is certainly very commendable, said Mr. Thornhill, but I see no necessity for your quitting England, you may reside as usual with Lady Beaumont,) four hundred pounds a year will keep your servant and horses, and answer common expences.” “No, (replied the Baronet,) I never can submit to that: I will certainly go abroad and travel frugally. I know my plan will give some pain to my mother, and must trust to your friendly endeavours for reconciling her to it.”

Matters being thus settled, Mr. Thornhill undertook the disagreeable office of giving Lady Beaumont all particulars: 'tis needless to mention her grief and vexation at so alarming a detail,

detail, so little expected; but she agreed to her son's proposal of going to the Continent without much reluctance, the fact was, she thought travelling would improve his understanding and fortify his mind; new objects and new situations might give a steadiness to his disposition, and her only objection was his want of a proper companion, so necessary for one unacquainted with foreign manners and customs; and this obstacle Mr. Thornhill hoped, he said, to remove, as he knew a young man of the name of Thompson, very worthy, and about Sir William's age, who had been intended for the physical line, had studied some time at Glasgow, and then travelled through France, Italy and Germany, with a gentleman of fashion, who was an invalid—the death of Mr. Thompson's father, who enjoyed a lucrative post but saved very little from his income, prevented his son from prosecuting his studies, and he was now anxious to accompany some gentleman abroad. —“ Well then, my dear Mr. Thornhill, (replied Lady Beaumont,) let us, if possible, engage him as a companion for William. I intend adding four hundred pounds a year to my son's income; and I would willingly allow Mr. Thompson two hundred. Mr. Thornhill doubted not, he said, but the offer would be accepted, and told Lady Beaumont he would introduce Mr. Thompson the next day.

When Sir William met his mother it was with conscious shame and evident confusion; she saw and pitied him; and without the least observation on the communication made to her of his affairs, addressed him with much complacency. “ I approve, my dear William, of your intended tour to the Continent; our good

friend has promised to procure you an eligible companion, and it shall be my care to supply you with the means of making a genteel figure if you cannot make a superb one.”—“Your goodness, madam, replied he, affects me more sensibly than your reproaches would have done; because it is unmerited: but, henceforth, I hope you will have no cause to blush for your son—as to pecuniary favors, you must permit me to decline them; you shall not deprive yourself of any thing on my account; I will live within my income.”—“That is a point I will not permit you to dispute with me; (answered she) I can do what I intend without the smallest inconvenience, having always saved from the handsome jointure your dear father left me; therefore no more words on that subject.” She then proposed an airing to him, adding, she would call on Lady Stanley and see her niece, whom she meant to take home with her.—“I have deserved mortification, said Sir William, faintly, smiling, and must be content to endure it.”—“’Tis the constant fruit of folly; replied she, in the same tone, but hasten to dress.” They were received by Sir Edward and Lady Stanley in so friendly a manner that Sir William recovered his spirits, and no disagreeable retrospect being made, he mentioned his intended tour, “for the purpose of *gaining* knowledge, (said he gaily,) and *forgetting* all I already know.”—His good friends approved his design. “*Apropos*, (said Sir Edward) I have received a letter from Lord Stormer, who appears to be in the high road to reformation; he mentions you in a very friendly manner, and foresaw this tour of your’s, which the kindness of *your joint friends* projected for both of you; and therefore, if you meet,

meet, you may console each other; but to be serious, added he, I entertain very promising hopes of Lord Stormer, and if you should take Bruffels in your way, I think you will find in him a desirable companion." "I shall be happy to profit by his acquaintance; (replied Sir William,) some trouble was taken to give us an ill impression of each other, but I hope bitter experience dearly bought has made us both wiser."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FATAL CONSEQUENCES OF AN INDULGENCE OF THE PASSIONS.

LADY Beaumont, after taking leave of her friends with grateful thanks for their attention to Miss Maybank, returned with her son and niece to her house, where she met a shock equally severe with any she had lately gone through, a letter was delivered to her which she

knew to be the hand writing of Mrs. Wilkins, breaking the seal hastily she read the following contents.

“ Dear and ever honoured madam,

It is with much reluctance I am compelled to give pain to a heart like your's, but I think I dare not conceal my own fears any longer. The dear young lady you kindly sent us as a companion has been long in a very languishing way, indeed she has never been quite well; but, within this last month she is entirely altered; she is reduced to a shadow, has a constant low fever, very little rest and no appetite—last week, after many objections on her part, I spoke to our apothecary to visit her, he assures us she is in a rapid decline; she takes some medicines, but says her disorder is beyond the doctor's skill; she begged me not to mention her situation to you, as in her letters to your ladyship she always represented herself as well; but my conscience would not permit me to be longer silent—I grieve for her as if she was my own child, for she is the best and sweetest young lady I ever knew. Whatever your commands are in this case, shall be obeyed by your ladyship's

ever obliged and faithful servant,

Mary Wilkins.”

Lady Beaumont read this letter with evident distress; and, when she had finished it, tears involuntarily burst from her eyes. Sir William, much alarmed, asked if he might be permitted

permitted to look over the letter? "Yes, (said her ladyship,) but it will wring your heart as it does mine."—He was indeed, distressed, and rising hastily from his chair he retired to another room: Lady Beaumont observing Miss Maybank was extremely uneasy, told her, that a young friend of theirs under some particular distresses, whose mother was abroad, was extremely ill without any friend near her, and that she felt much perplexed how to act:—She was interrupted by the return of her son: "I will go down to Exeter, said he abruptly; I will see her once more be the consequence what it may."—"Good Heaven, (replied his mother,) you are not in earnest sure?"—"Never more so: I would not quit England without seeing her for worlds.—Oh, that villain Minors, what has he not to answer for!"—"Miss Maybank withdrew:—"I am the properest person to go:" answered Lady Beaumont." "We will go together, (said he hastily.) My dear mother let us lose no time." "Well, replied she, if you are determined, we will go together and set off to-morrow. I will send my niece again to Lady Stanley, who will rejoice in having her: poor girl, she has only met hitherto with confusion and trouble! I will try to prevail on Miss Rivers to accompany me to Town, in which, as you are going abroad, there can be no impropriety; and change of air perhaps may be of service to her." Lady Beaumont then went to Miss Maybank, and having mentioned the necessity she was under of visiting the young lady under such melancholy circumstances; "I will not, (my dear niece, said she,) ask you to accompany me in a journey which can afford you no pleasure: Lady Stanley

Stanley will think herself obliged to you for another visit, and will introduce you to her select friends; I must depend upon your good nature to excuse my going without you." Miss Maybank assured her, she was only sorry for the occasion of her intended absence, and that she should derive both pleasure and profit to herself by residing with Lady Stanley, whom she already greatly respected.

This being settled, her ladyship wrote a note to Lady Stanley, accounting for her journey in the same manner she had done to her niece. Sir William also wrote to Mr. Thornhill, desiring him to get his house and furniture disposed of against his return, which he supposed might be in less than a fortnight, and to pursue his intentions respecting settling his affairs. This being done, preparations were made for their journey. They ordered a hired carriage, and her ladyship's woman and one footman were to be their only attendants.

The following morning Lady Stanley came to fetch Miss Maybank, and the others set off on their journey. "I have yielded to your eager wish of accompanying me, said Lady Beaumont to her son, although I know no good purpose it can answer; for I very much doubt if Miss Rivers will see you; indeed I fear your presence may be attended with disagreeable effects." "I hope not, said he, and I hardly know why I wish to see her; but I know I should be extremely miserable to be in suspense about her real situation. Why was she sent so far off?—Lady Beaumont gave her reasons, which he acknowledged to be just ones; and they proceeded with all the speed possible on their journey.

When

When arrived at Exeter, Lady Beaumont wrote a note from the inn to Mrs. Wilkins, that she might prepare Miss Rivers to receive her. After taking some refreshment, she left Sir William, under much agitation of mind, and drove to Mrs. Wilkins's.—When the carriage stopped, Mrs. Wilkins flew out to receive her, but it was evident she had been in tears. “O my dearest lady how happy I am to see you, exclaimed she. “I thank you, my good Mrs. Wilkins.—How is Miss Rivers?” “Ah, madam, very ill indeed. I broke it out as tenderly as I could, that your ladyship was come;—poor thing! she was ready to faint; joy and sorrow overpowered her, she said; joy to see you once more, and sorrow that you should have taken so long a journey on her account; for I owed to her I had written to you. Alas! poor dear creature, she will not long see anybody, I believe.” “God forbid! said Lady Beaumont, earnestly, but go up and let her know I am here.” Mrs. Wilkins went up stairs, and her ladyship remained in the parlour under great anxiety of mind. At last she heard footsteps, and rose to follow the messenger; but what was her surprise and grief when the door was thrown open, and she saw a pale emaciated figure, supported by Mrs. Wilkins, enter the room, and, before she had power to prevent her, Miss Rivers threw herself on her knees, and fainted at the feet of her benefactress.

Lady Beaumont, very much terrified, assisted in recovering and raising her into an arm chair, tho' her own situation was little better. She was in truth extremely shocked to see the very great alteration in the person of Miss Rivers; but,

but, endeavouring to recover herself, she kindly blamed her for coming down, and for deceiving her as to the state of her health. "Alas, my dear madam, said she, I ought rather to blame the well meant kindness of my good friend here, which has given you the trouble of so long a journey to so little purpose."—"Say not so, my dear girl, answered her ladyship; I only regret I did not come sooner; but I flatter myself, that, knowing how much I esteem you, for my sake you will endeavour to get better; and as I shall be shortly left with only a worthy amiable girl, my niece, perhaps you will return with me, and be introduced to her; I shall rejoice to procure for her a companion to deserving as yourself." "Oh madam! cried Miss Rivers bursting into tears your goodness overpowers me. Once indeed I might have wished for the honor you mention; but I never was deserving of it; for early in life I was vain, unthinking, and dissipated." "We will not look back, interrupted Lady Beaumont, it can answer no good end; I am come to enliven your solitary hours, to administer comfort to your mind, and see that proper care is taken of your health." "You are too kind, replied Miss Rivers; but I am convinced no medicines can restore me; I have no disorder but a broken heart, and for that there is no cure. My mother, my poor unhappy mother, has forgot her worthless child—only one letter have I ever received, and that contained merely an account of the pleasures she enjoyed, mixed with expressions of astonishment at my obstinacy in depriving myself of the same enjoyments. Ah, what must be her feelings when reduced to a state of weakness

ness like mine!" Lady Beaumont observing she appeared quite spent and faint with talking, desired she might be assisted up stairs, and when with difficulty they got her up, and obliged her to take a little refreshment; her ladyship made her lie down on the sofa, whilst she sent for a physician.

To amuse her mind, she related to her the marriage of Colonel Minors, his desertion of his lady, and his elopement with the Signora; but she took care not to mention Sir William. "Poor Mrs. Minors, said Miss Rivers! How dreadful it is to be deceived and abandoned by the man we love, and to know that our own folly deserved the punishment; yet, happily for her, she has a parent to receive and console her." After a little hesitation, she continued, in a faltering voice: "You said, my dear madam, you should soon be left alone. Is Sir William married?"—"No, my love, (answered her ladyship, pleased that she had mentioned him,) he has no engagement of that sort, but is going abroad."—"May he be happy (returned she, sighing,) wherever he goes!"

The physician being arrived, he said she had a strong nervous fever, and was no doubt extremely weak; that she must be carried into the air, and take nourishment very frequently, which, with strengthening cordials, he hoped would be of service to her. Lady Beaumont followed him out, and asked his opinion; he told her, he was sorry to say the young lady's complaint appeared to him beyond the reach of medicine. "She may possibly hold out a few days, or a week or two, added he; but in cases like her's there is no perfect judgment can be formed."—With a heavy heart and dejected

jected countenance Lady Beaumont returned to her young friend, who, on her entrance, in said, faintly smiling, "I see your own kind concern for me, my dear madam; your looks I can read a confirmation of my opinion, and I must say, of my ardent wish: A very short time will release me from all my sorrows." Do not despair, my dear Miss Rivers, said her ladyship; you know not how much may be done to restore your health by the attention of your friends, by air and gentle exercise." "Tis all in vain, replied she; I am too weak for exercise. Could any thing restore me your presence would do it; but 'tis impossible. How good, how compassionate you are! (continued she, observing Lady Beaumont in tears;) but do not add to my regrets the idea of giving pain to that bosom, the seat of every gentle virtue. I have long been endeavouring to prepare myself for the awful hour, which now approaches; and, I trust, my penitence will be accepted. Happy has it been for me that I have been afflicted, for, otherwise years might have passed away in dissipation and folly, and a sudden disorder have cut me off unprepared. Rejoice with me then, my dear madam, that I have had time allowed me to repent. What would I give if my poor mother was here to view me now!—Such a sight would strike conviction on her mind more than volumes of advice." Lady Beaumont, perceiving she was faint and exhausted, persuaded her to lie down and try to rest, whilst she returned to the inn:—She readily obeyed, for it was with extreme difficulty she had supported herself so long; and kissing Lady Beaumont's hand passionately,
" May

"May Heaven bless you, my dearest madam, exclaimed she, for all your kindness to an unfortunate girl! May you live to see your best hopes realized in the happiness of your family."

Her ladyship having recommended Miss Rivers to the care of Mrs. Wilkins, returned to the inn, oppressed with sorrow. Sir William, who had waited her return with anxious impatience, eagerly enquired how she left Miss Rivers? "I will not flatter you, she replied; in all probability she has but a few days to live." "Good Heaven, madam, said he, what do you tell me? Is it possible she is so very ill, and have I been the cause of reducing her to despair and death? O, I must, I will see her; if she will accept of my broken fortunes, I will marry her. Who knows what effect my resolution, my penitence, and vows of love may have upon her?" Lady Beaumont shook her head; "I fear 'tis now too late to save her, said she; but, if you are in earnest write; and I will take the letter. You must not obtrude yourself into her presence; the surprise might prove fatal; I will plead for you; happy should I be if I could succeed in restoring her! But do not give way to hope, for I entertain none in your favor."—Under the most painful inquietude of mind Sir William retired to write to Miss Rivers, and his mother embraced the opportunity to inform Miss Maybank of their safe arrival at Exeter.

When her son returned with his letter, she readily accorded with his impatience to renew her visit to Miss Rivers, at the same time advising him to take a walk, and calm the agitation of his mind.

When her ladyship came to Mrs. Wilkins's,
she

She was informed Miss Rivers had just been recovered from a fainting fit which had left her exceedingly weak and low: on entering her apartment she saw a very visible alteration, and was in some doubt about mentioning her son's letter; but Miss Rivers having taken some cordial drops which the doctor had sent, was much revived and began to talk with some degree of ease; Mrs. Wilkins and the nurse left the room, when Lady Beaumont, tenderly pressing her hand, said, "Do not be surprised my love, if I have undertaken to plead in behalf of a repentant sinner, one who has been led into the commission of his errors by very bad advice and profligate examples, but whom misfortunes and painful experience have restored to reason; he is deeply sensible of his faults, and earnestly desires to atone for them to the utmost of his power."—"I will not pretend to misunderstand you, madam, answered Miss Rivers, and I have now, I hope, obtained sufficient composure to talk on a subject which was for a long time grievous even to think of; towards Sir William Beaumont I retain not the smallest degree of resentment, and I entreat you to tell him I even esteem him, and sincerely pray for his happiness."—"Well then, my good girl, in such a disposition of mind you will not refuse to read this letter; I will step into your dressing-room; consider it with attention, comply with our joint wishes and we may all of us yet see many happy days together." So saying, her ladyship withdrew into the adjoining room, and, with trembling hands, Miss Rivers broke the seal and read the following contents;

TO

TO MISS RIVERS.

“ Madam,

Did not my mother condescend to be herself the messenger of my wishes and the bearer of this letter, I know not that I should ever have summoned resolution enough to address you, whom I have irreparably injured: you, who must despise and detest me. I might, indeed, plead that I was deceived by a villain, that I was misled as to your character, and taught to believe the offers with which I dared to insult you, would have been readily accepted; nay, that they were even wished for: I might with truth plead this: but I *ought* to have known you better; I *ought* to have seen that real innate worth, that strict purity of sentiment which influenced you to treat those offers with the contempt they deserved, and to despise the unworthy writer—I feel and acknowledge, with conscious shame, that I merited the disdain I have incurred:—and now, madam, I have no reparation to offer worth your acceptance, unless, from uncommon generosity, you will deign to compassionate a man broken in his fortunes, unhappy in his mind, a man reduced to a comparative state of indigence and dependance on the best of mothers:—many are the afflictions I have caused her; will Miss Rivers condescend to reconcile her to her unworthy son? will she, by a generous acceptance of his vows, become the daughter, the comforter of this excellent parent, and constitute the happiness of a man whose study it shall be to prove his sense of the obligation?—

obligation?—hear that dear parent plead for her son; and condescend to admit to your presence,

Dearest madam,

Your truly devoted

WILLIAM BEAUMONT.

'Tis difficult to describe the various emotions which agitated the mind of Miss Rivers during her perusal of this letter—the delicacy he had observed in ascribing her contempt of him to the offers he had made her of a settlement; the compliments he paid her heart and understanding, with the idea of conferring an obligation on his mother and himself, all crowded with force on her mind, and, for a moment, excited a wish that she had been in circumstances to have accepted his offer—"ah!" cried she, had I conducted myself properly, had I been open and generous in my attachment, instead of employing artifice and duplicity, what a happy fate might mine have been in such a family! but, perhaps, even, the pleasures of life might have seduced me into a thousand errors."—again she read the letter, and painful remembrance caused a violent burst of tears.—

Lady Beaumont, who heard her sobs from the next room, hastened to comfort her, and folding her arms round her, "Compose yourself, my dear child, said she, consider me as your mother in every sense of the word"—"Oh, exclaimed the poor girl, that I indeed had been blest

blest with such a mother ! alas, my poor mother pursues a fleeting shadow, and sacrifices real happiness to vanity and empty pleasures ; how will she regret on the awful bed of death, every hour spent in folly and dissipation, without one good or generous action to compensate for the weeks and months so idly thrown away !” “ Do not, my dear girl, give way to unavailing sorrow ; let me indulge the sweet hope of calling you daughter :—poor William is indeed unworthy your acceptance, for he is literally poor ; his fortune is gone, and his peace of mind destroyed : think then what an obligation you have it in your power to confer on me and my only son.” “ Do not urge me on this subject, my dear madam ; I cannot bear it now ; I will consider every thing, and this night, if I have strength to write, will answer Sir William’s letter ; mean time, tell him, I retain no anger ; I never, even in thought, upbraided him ; for I deserved the punishment my folly and weakness brought upon me. The unutterable obligations I owe to your bounty and goodness are imprinted on my heart, and have long since effaced the remembrance of any supposed injury received from Sir William ;—but is it possible he is now at Exeter ?” —“ He is, replied her ladyship, and dying with impatience to see you.” —“ That cannot be, said Miss Rivers, I feel myself unequal to the trial ; and I hope, when he has my answer to his letter, he will give up the idea.” Lady Beaumont having seen her composed in bed, and given strict orders to be called should there be any apparent alteration, left her, to return to her son, after desiring Mrs. Wilkins to get a bed put up for her the next day in her house. When her ladyship repeated

peated to Sir William the conversation between herself and Miss Rivers; he was violently agitated, and finding there was likely to be some difficulties in having his offer accepted and even in seeing her, his natural impetuosity made him almost raving, and his eager desire of marrying her exceeded all bounds. His mother found great difficulty in subduing his transports, and prevailing on him to be calm till he had her letter. In the morning she sent to know how Miss Rivers had passed the night, and was informed tolerably well, likewise that she had been up very early and written the letter which was sent by the messenger. With much emotion Sir William broke the seal and found the following contents:

TO SIR WILLIAM BEAUMONT.

“Sir,
The unexpected contents of the letter you have honoured me with, deserve my grateful thanks; and I candidly own there was a time when the offer you have now made me, would have been received with transport; though even at that time, I was every way unworthy of being your's. When first you knew me I was gay, unthinking and imprudent, with no views or hopes but what centered in grandeur and dissipation. Unfortunately I had no monitor, no friend who could, either by precept or example, teach me to correct my errors. The rock on which

which most females are wrecked is a wrong education, brought up to exist but in dress, admiration and pleasures I had no leisure to improve my mind, and a few showy superficial accomplishments were to be my passport to greatness and general notice. The death of my father reversed all my expectations: reduced to a state below mediocrity, we were obliged to shrink from that observation we had coveted to obtain. Time proved to us the little sincerity of those professions which pass current in the world under the mask of friendship—we found ourselves deserted by *all*. There is no crime like poverty in the opinion of the world—my poor mother could not easily resign all her hopes, her partiality for me led her to believe my few attractions might yet procure me an advantageous marriage.—’tis needless to mention her disappointments—a little business brought us to London, accident informed us that Lady Stanley was in Town—that lady had been singular in her kindness to us during our first distresses; my mother thought it a duty to wait on her; there, sir, I first saw you, and you know all that followed. Ambition was my first inducement to engage your notice, but in seeking to entangle you, I lost myself. O, let no young woman ever think she stands secure, or permit private interviews and unguarded freedoms! Let modesty and delicacy be the guardians of her honor, or she is lost for ever! a contrived *tête à tête* on my side, with shame I confess it, and a desire of bringing you to an open avowal of your designs, proved my destruction—let me fly from the remembrance—the consequence is too well known to you. Misfortunes are oftentimes necessary to curb folly and vice, I found it so; despicable
in

in my own eyes, I no longer looked forward with exultation or hope, and every step my mother took was entirely unknown to me. The letter you sent me, though it wrung my heart, completed my reformation. I beheld in your sentiments the opinion of mankind, and the general judgments formed of those females who, divested of fortune, seek by dress and frivolity, to attract notice which can never be attended with esteem. I resolved to retire from the world and atone, by mortification and repentance, for the errors of my conduct. Your generous, your blessed mother, furnished me with the means of doing so beyond my hopes or wishes. I have found myself, ever since my arrival here, gradually declining: do not, I beseech you, sir, accuse yourself: *I* only am to blame; but I trust a sincere repentance will be accepted; and I now feel ten thousand times more delight in the idea that a very short time will release me from misery and self-reproach, than ever I experienced in pursuing my brightest hopes when in full health—and now, sir, while I acknowledge, with gratitude, my sense of the undeserved offer you have made me. You will see the impossibility of my profiting by it; and, permit me to say, in justice to myself, that, were I sure to recover and live for years, I never would pollute the vows of hymen, nor by the specious name of marriage screen myself from the censure of the world, and give an unworthy daughter to my generous benefactress. May you, sir, live to convey to her the highest of all pleasures, a perfect approbation of your conduct, —may you by a happy union with a truly virtuous and amiable woman, smooth the downhill of your mother's days with peace and comfort,

fort, and may you obtain that highest of all earthly joys, a self-approving conscience ! My last breath shall expire in imploring blessings on Lady Beaumont and her family,

ANNA RIVERS."

To describe the feelings of Sir William on reading this letter, would be impossible; "There, madam, cried he, throwing it upon the table, read the destruction of all *my hopes*." He covered his face with his hands, in an agony beyond what he had ever felt:—grief, admiration and regret at once assailed him; he cursed the Colonel, the mother and himself, like one deprived of reason.

Lady Beaumont having perused the letter, could not restrain her tears—"My dear William, said she, you must submit: was there any possibility of her recovery I would never cease importuning her in your favor, but now it would be the utmost cruelty to urge her on the subject and disturb her serenity at this awful period: from the same motives I hope you will give up all desire of seeing her."—"No, madam, answered he impatiently, I must see her:—Intercede for me, I conjure you ! let her admit me but once to her presence ! to hear my pardon pronounced is all I ask."—"The office you force upon me is a very unpleasant one, and I fear you would reap nothing but misery, even should your wishes be gratified."

Lady Beaumont now prepared to attend Miss Rivers, whilst Sir William retired to his room, again to peruse a letter which was already engraven on his heart. When her ladyship stopped

ped at Mrs. Wilkins's door, the good woman met her with eager impatience: "Ah, madam, cried she, I rejoice that you are come, the poor young lady is very ill indeed:—we think getting up so early and writing so long hurt her very much:—the doctor is with her now; but she is on the bed."—Lady Beaumont, much affected at this account, hastened up stairs, and met him at the top, just coming down—"How is your patient sir?" said she. "Very low indeed, madam; she is much altered since yesterday, and, I think, will scarcely hold out another day." "Good Heaven! exclaimed Lady Beaumont, are there, then, no hopes?" "I am sorry to say, madam, there are none; nature is nearly exhausted; the young lady is sensible of it herself, and appears perfectly resigned.—I will, however, look in upon her again in the afternoon, for I feel interested for her, and grieve that I can be of no service." Lady Beaumont, deeply concerned, entered Miss Rivers's apartment, she was still on the bed: seeing her ladyship she attempted to rise, but the effort was unavailing. "Excuse me, my dearest madam, for receiving you thus, was all she could say. "Compose yourself, my dear girl; I am come to sit by you, and I entreat you to continue as you are; I am only sorry to hear you have fatigued yourself so much this morning." "I had a tolerable night," she replied, and resolved to write, if possible, to Sir William; I hope he is satisfied; I would not, on any consideration, leave a regret on his mind which may hurt his peace." "I will not deceive you, my dear Miss Rivers; said her ladyship, William is very unhappy; he begs, he entreats you will see him: I promised to mention his request, but I wish

wish not to give you pain; therefore do not let any consideration for me induce you to distress yourself on his account." Miss Rivers paused a little, but, at last replied, "Not long since, madam, it would have been worse than death to me to have seen your son, and I own I would avoid it still, if left to my choice; but, if he persists in his desire of seeing me, I will endeavour to support the interview, and the sooner he comes the better; I think I can be carried into the next room and lie as easy on the sofa as I do here." The nurse being called, she with some difficulty was conveyed to the adjoining apartment, and having taken some drops, appeared a little revived—Lady Beaumont sent for her son, though she dreaded the effects it might have on the poor declining object before her, who, she plainly saw, was past all hopes of recovery. She was very soon informed he was come, and having sent down the nurse and given Miss Rivers a cordial to support her spirits, he was desired to walk up; when he entered the room and beheld the pale, emaciated, and almost lifeless figure lying on the sofa, he started with horror, but recovering he advanced hastily and threw himself on his knees by her side, unable to articulate a single word; she was violently agitated, but making an effort to speak she held out her hand and faintly said "Do not grieve"—he took her hand and passionately kissing it; "Forgive me, dearest Miss Rivers, cried he, pardon your murderer!" Do not call yourself so, you are not to blame; I forgive your error as I hope to be myself forgiven; mine was the fault, mine should be the punishment:" then pausing a little and seeing Sir William in tears—"you have humanity and sensibility; continued she, cherish

cherish those virtues; pity the poor and unfortunate; respect virtue in distress; govern your passions, and consult the peace and happiness of your excellent parent." "O, Miss Rivers, answered Sir William, if you wish me to be happy try to live, or else everlasting remorse will be my portion." "Death, returned she, is busy at my heart, but I welcome his approaches, and with joy behold the end of a painful journey through a world of falsehood and deceit, where virtue is neglected, and where vice, if gilded by riches, meets encouragement and applause."—"Do not fatigue yourself, my love, said Lady Beaumont, with talking too much, William had better withdraw and return again in the evening, if you will permit him."—"No, replied the poor girl, let me speak whilst I am able—"Dear Sir William be comforted—your sorrow distresses me.—I am going to be happy, I feel that I am; do not accuse yourself—but let my sad fate act like a talisman on your heart to guard you from indulging your passions:—and when you behold a poor unprotected female, be yourself the guardian of her honor. Believe me, when the hour arrives which takes us from the world, the reflection of one benevolent action performed, one vicious thought rejected, or one criminal pursuit given up, will afford you more real happiness, than would the fullest enjoyment of sensual wishes. God bless you! added she, may you live to encrease the happiness of your worthy parent!"—she withdrew her hand, and turned her head aside to conceal her emotion. Sir William who still knelt by her, a statue of despair, observing her evident distress, cried out; "Let me see you once more—O, Miss Rivers, if you wish me to live, let me

me return again in the evening!—"She again extended her hand; "Leave me now; *to-morrow* if I *can*, I will see you; but I am very ill, and you must go—Heaven bless you!" "Yes, cried he, starting up, I will go—dearest of women, you shall be obeyed!—I will endeavour to support existence till to-morrow.—Adieu!" added he, kissing her almost lifeless hand; *you may* forgive me, but never shall I forgive myself nor the miscreant whose villainous counsels have laid up for me everlasting remorse." He quitted the room under much agitation, and with evident reluctance. "Thank Heaven, this interview is over, said Miss Rivers, after a short silence, poor Sir William! I respect his sorrow, and I hope the event which must soon take place, will have an effect upon his future conduct."—She had scarcely uttered these words when she was seized with a faintness which alarmed Lady Beaumont beyond expression; however she soon recovered, but with such an increasing weakness and difficulty of breathing that she requested to be undressed and put to bed; this was at length effected, but with so much fatigue to her, that another fainting fit left her at the point of death: she desired the nurse to retire; then, taking Lady Beaumont's hand, she pressed it to her lips; "I am going my dearest Lady—forgive all the trouble and sorrow—Heaven will reward your goodness to a poor imprudent girl—deserted by her natural parent—O, Almighty Father, continued she, folding her hands with fervour, pity and forgive my mother!—may she soon be sensible of the folly of those pleasures,—alas! how falsely called such—she now pursues—may she be happy here and hereafter—Father of mercies, hear my prayer!—she paused a moment on seeing

ing Lady Beaumont drowned in tears; adieu, dearest, best of women!—in another world we shall meet again.—Bless Sir William for me.”—She grew very faint,—her ladyship hastily administered some drops. She could not swallow, but—making a great effort to speak, “Blessed Father, said she, thy will be done!”—and, with these words, scarcely audible, *expired!* thus fell the once gay, lively and agreeable Miss Rivers, a victim to the errors of education!

Lady Beaumont, overwhelmed with grief, had scarce power to ring the bell before she fainted; and the nurse, on entering the room, gave a loud shriek, on seeing both ladies to appearance lifeless.—Mrs. Wilkins, running in, quickly observed what had happened; and, although most sincerely concerned for Miss Rivers, she directed her attention to the recovery of Lady Beaumont, who, when she regained her senses, they would have conveyed to another room; but she desired to remain, and with a violent burst of tears, kissed the clammy lips of her lifeless young friend:—she then sealed up the drawers and boxes, in presence of Mrs. Wilkins, and on opening the drawer of the dressing-glass, she found the following letter, addressed to herself:

“With a thorough conviction that this will be the last time I shall ever take up a pen, I write, dearest and most respected Lady Beaumont, to offer my heartfelt thanks for all the unmerited favors you have heaped upon me:—the remembrance of them is a cordial in my dying hours.—I feel, with joy, the approach of that time which will release me from all my sorrows;
and

and but one idea is now capable of giving me pain;—my poor unhappy mother—oh, madam! complete your goodness, and if you can find her residence, let her know my fate—tell her, I die a martyr to Vanity and Folly—that my last thoughts dwell on her, that I beseech her to give up the pursuit of pleasures which must end in bitter remorse—teach her, by your example, to learn how good, how glorious is virtue and benevolence! my thoughts ramble, the pen drops from my fingers—my dearest lady, may God Almighty ever bless you and your's with happiness here, and everlasting felicity hereafter!

Your ever grateful,

ANNA RIVERS."

Inclosed in this letter was a paper specifying she had forty-seven guineas in her cabinet: she desired all her cloathes might be disposed of, and that after her funeral charges were paid, and a handsome present given to Mrs. Wilkins, the residue might remain in Lady Beaumont's hands for her mother's use:—she requested, as the annuity of four hundred pounds a year ceased with her life, that the two thousand pounds with the interest due, might return to her mother: this sum, she observed, was sufficient to maintain her mother decently, and more than that was needless.

Lady Beaumont, determined to fulfil these several wishes in the strictest manner, and as her contempt for Mrs. Rivers rose in proportion to her regret for her unfortunate child, she made no scruple to resume the annuity granted to the latter, and thereby oblige the former to contract her expences and live within the bounds of her own fortune. Having desired Mrs. Wilkins to see the last duties performed in a genteel style, the expences of which she determined to defray herself, with a heavy heart and a melancholy countenance, she returned to the inn, where she found Sir William, under the deepest concern, with the letter Miss Rivers had wrote to him lying on table:—on her entrance he started, and looking earnestly at her; “I see, madam, there are no hopes, cried he, your looks tell me I am a miserable wretch.”—“I will not deceive you; answered Lady Beaumont, you must arm yourself with resolution: my grief is little less than your’s; but we must submit to the decrees of Providence.”—“Good Heavens! what do you mean?—he is not dead, surely?” a deep sigh and a shake of the head from his mother at once informed him of the event he dreaded: he threw himself into the chair he had risen from, and clasped his hands; “She is dead, then, I have destroyed her!—how severely am I punished!—then, pausing a little, he started up:—Excuse me, madam, I cannot bear company now:” and, flying into his bed-room, he shut the door.

Lady Beaumont, who knew the violence of his passions, followed him. “William, said she, opening the door, I respect your sorrow, nor do I forbid the indulgence of it: a heart
deeply

deeply affected must feel in proportion to it's disappointments:—but do not forget you have a mother whose happiness is in your hands, and who deserves your consideration.” “Fear not, my dearest madam, that I will forget what I owe to your goodness:—suffer me to be alone for an hour or two, and I will join you, I hope, more composed.” Satisfied with this assurance, Lady Beaumont returned to her apartment, and sat down to acquaint her niece, that she had lost the friend she came to visit, and should very shortly return to London; she also wrote to her solicitor, who had the paying of the annuity to Mrs. Rivers, requesting to know where that lady resided, and ordering all payments to be stopped after the next quarter.

Just as she had finished her letters, Sir William returned to her with a countenance in which grief was visibly impressed, but with a composure she hardly expected. He desired to know the particular circumstances attending the decease of Miss Rivers, and wept abundantly at the recital.—“She is happy, said he, to grieve for her is selfish,—I mourn my own folly, and shall do so to the end of my life.—O, if I could but see the villain punished whose pernicious advice has ruined my peace I could die with transport!” “Doubt not, replied Lady Beaumont, of his punishment; even now in the gratification of his wicked contrivances, he must be miserable; and the hour will arrive when remorse of conscience will inflict torments more bitter than his greatest enemy could wish.” Sir William begged to have a lock of Miss Rivers's hair to set in a ring, which Lady Beaumont promised to procure for him: they parted at an early hour; and the following morning she returned to Mrs. Wilkins's and finished all her

her remaining business: the next day she set out for London accompanied by her son: he still preserved a deep melancholy, and she flattered herself the late awful event would have a deep effect upon his future conduct.

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END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

